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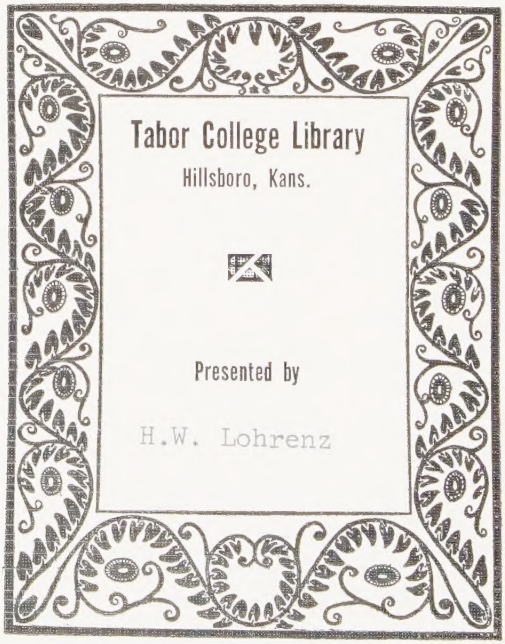

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OUR DOCTRINES

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OF THE
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DIRECTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF THIS BOOK

For those who wish to study the book as a part of the Church Administration Study Course and with a view to receiving the award offered by that Department, the following directions are given:

Lesson Assignments.

Under ordinary conditions each chapter may constitute a suitable lesson assignment.

When used in college courses the professor is expected to use his own discretion as to assignments and requirements.

Examinations.

(1) The teacher will conduct a written examination at the close of the study of the book.

(2) The questions may be selected by the class teacher from the list of questions given at the close of the book. The teacher will ask that each one sign this statement: "I have neither given nor received help during this examination."

(3) Members of the class will be asked to answer the questions at one sitting without the textbook or help of any kind.

(4) The class teacher will examine the papers of the class and, on blanks which will be furnished for the purpose, will send the names of those who make the required grade of seventy per cent to the Department of Church Administration, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tennessee. The proper award will be sent forward.

Individual Students May Pursue the Study in Their Own Way.

When they are ready for examination they will apply for a list of questions with necessary instructions. The questions will be selected from the list given at the close of the book.

To the Memory
of
EDGAR YOUNG MULLINS,
Beloved teacher and honored colleague
of the author,
This book is affectionately
dedicated.

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Chapter I

SOURCE AND AUTHORITY

I. Method of Christian Experience.

The congregation was standing while singing the invitation hymn. The preacher had been pleading with the lost to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour and find in him peace of soul and happiness of life. It was just a regular Sunday evening service, but there seemed to be something unusual about it. There were some who sensed that a struggle was on somewhere in the church, and that something was about to happen. And happen it did. A middle-aged man stepped out of his place into the aisle and walked resolutely forward, grasped the pastor's hand and pulled him down with him to his knees. There they prayed as the congregation sang on. Now all knew that a struggle was on.

What was happening? What strange thing was taking place in this man's life? What power had gripped him? For, indeed, he was moved, disturbed, shaken, by an unseen power. He was a mechanic, employed in the garage just around the corner. He had moved into the little town sometime before from a northern state. On this Sunday evening he had rather casually stepped in for the service.

Now the singing has stopped. The struggle has passed and the man has taken his seat at the front. The pastor proceeds to ask him the usual questions

for such occasions. Has he confessed his sin to God and trusted in Jesus, the divine-human Saviour, for eternal life? Does he desire to follow Christ in the ordinance of baptism and after that into the full fellowship of the church? Does he purpose to serve Christ faithfully as the Lord of his life? To these and all similar questions he gives satisfactory answers. Whereupon he is received by the church as a candidate for baptism. The next Sunday night he is baptized.

There we usually leave the new member until such time as we chance to need him in some phase of the church work. But we want to follow him back to his home on the night that he made his decision to accept Christ. Then we would like to study him frequently after that. He is a meditative sort. He reflects upon his conversion. At first the preacher asked him certain questions, but now he asks himself many other and more searching questions. How did he come to be interested in this matter of eternal life? What influences were brought to bear upon him? To be sure he had been reading his Bible, but only spasmodically. He had even attended the services at the church as it happened to be convenient to do so, and he always listened attentively to the message from God's Word. But these irregular influences didn't account for the change that had come in his life. He had been a gambler at cards, but no more of that now. He had been a regular drinker, but that had stopped with his conversion. Moreover, he now finds real joy in prayer and Bible study and church work. Could he explain this change that had come over him?

As he reflected upon his experience he began to grasp something of the meaning and place of doctrine in this new life. He found that what he believed held for him, in part at least, the explanation of his experience. And, in turn, his experience would in a large measure give vital meaning to his beliefs. In other words, he found that his experience and his beliefs are wrapped up in each other. One depends upon the other. Now, I am wondering if, after all, that is not the best way for us to approach the study of our essential doctrines. If our experience of the grace of Christ does not hold a primary place in our Christian doctrine, then the best that we have is a formal creed. We claim, rather, that we have a system of vital doctrines, life-beliefs, from the living Christ. Certainly to study our experience in Christ, as we study what we believe and why we believe it, will enable us to see and understand more clearly the path of Christian growth.

The experience related above of the conversion of a mature man is not so common as that found in the adolescent age. But it is told here for two reasons: because it contained all the essential elements of conversion; and because the writer knew the man and was deeply stirred and impressed by his experience. Let the reader study his own experience in the same manner.

1. *Christian experience defined.*

Perhaps the first thing for us to do is to get fixed in our minds what Christian experience is. Is it conversion? Or, is it conversion plus other elements? Or, is it something in addition to and different from conversion? Let the reader stop here and try to answer these questions before reading on. Now, conversion is the initial

experience in which we turn from sin to Christ and benefit by the work in us of his saving grace. Our neighbors see that we have undergone a change within because the habits of the new life are so manifestly different from the old ways. That is conversion. It is the new direction of the life that is outwardly visible. Christian experience includes that and goes on beyond. We may define it as the work of Christ in the lives of his followers, or, to be more specific, it is the fellowship that believers have in Christ, that begins when they trust him and he redeems them, and continues on through life with ever increasing reality. Such a conception of Christian experience must influence our doctrines.

2. *Advantage of this method.*

It will be seen at once that the use of Christian experience in the statement of our doctrines has many and great advantages. In the first place it saves us from the formalism of reciting a creed. A creed without an experience of grace in the life of the one using it is but an empty shell. Again, this method will serve as a principle of interpretation, both of the Scriptures and of our fellowship with Christ. Our doctrinal statement thus becomes a witness to the saving power of the gospel of Christ. The world judges Christ by his power manifest in the Christian. A third advantage is that we have in this method a medium of certifying our beliefs. It is for Christian doctrine what the test tube and the laboratory are for science. Our doctrines must be vitalized, and the use of Christian experience is the only means of accomplishing that.

II. Source of Our Doctrines.

A doctrine is that which is taught and accepted, believed. It is the interpretation of some phase of life. Christian doctrines are those teachings that interpret our relations with God in terms of Christ and his saving work. Of course, the ultimate source of all our knowledge is God, but there must be a medium through which we gain knowledge of him. That medium is revelation.

I. *The Bible.*

Thus we come to the Bible. It is our guidebook in matters of religion and church polity. It is in that realm that it sets forth its claims. It is well for us to keep in mind that it does not claim, nor do Christians claim for it, the place of authority in the realm of science or history. It nowhere seeks to state scientific laws, it is not a medium through which scientific data are to be accumulated. It is a religious book. It claims to point the way through which man may come into a saving knowledge of God. It offers to man deliverance from sin to fellowship with God, when man meets the conditions that it lays down. It holds up before its readers the aim of bringing the largest possible number of human souls into this blessed and eternal fellowship. In this realm it is all-sufficient. It proposes to lead us to God, and by following its teachings we have found God. The Bible has made good its claims. It is a reliable guide. We turn to it, then, as the source of Christian doctrine, and give our attention directly to it for the present.

(1) There are three factors that make the Bible a trustworthy source of Christian doctrine.

(a) The first has already been mentioned, revelation. By the revelation of God we mean God's making himself known to men. He has drawn the curtain aside and permitted his people to see and know him. The Bible is the record of the experiences of some of those to whom God revealed himself and the message contained in the revelation.

Because of the sin that had come between man and God a complete revelation could not be given in one experience. Man was not ready to receive it. He had to be prepared by steps that gradually led up to the finished stage. Thus we have the progressive element in biblical revelation. God gave to each generation all the divine truth that his people of that generation could receive. And there was always enough in the portion that was given in each stage to lead his people to the next higher step. Thus revelation progressed from the first gray streaks of divine light that appeared on the horizon of a sin-darkened world to the noontide brilliance of the light revealed in Christ, the supreme revelation of God. We dwell in this noon-hour of revelation. The earlier stages have value for us as they are interpreted in Christ. We find upon study that the New Testament and the Old Testament are indissolubly wrought together. The New is the fulfilment of the Old, the completion of it. The same gospel of grace is basic in both the Old and the New.

Late one afternoon we made an effort to see the recumbent statue of Robert E. Lee that rests in the little chapel building on the campus of Washington and Lee University. The doors were locked, but we found the keeper of the key. She graciously granted our request

and opened the door and led us to the statue. There we studied it. It was Valentine's record in stone of the character of the beloved general of the Southern army. The lines on the face seemed to soften under our gaze, the lips almost moved, the figure appeared to breathe, it was so lifelike. Wonderful record of a man who was known and loved by thousands in another generation! Then we may read of this same man in books that were written by some who knew him. He is not without witness among those who cherish his memory.

The Bible is the record of God's message and revelation of himself to man. We read it and God speaks to us from the record. We look intently and reverently and by faith we see him standing before us alive, real.

(b) The second factor for us to emphasize is inspiration. The record was written by those whom God chose and guided in the task. Just how God inspired them in writing the Scriptures we do not know. When God's Spirit deals with man's spirit there is necessarily something mysterious and inexplicable about it. The infinite God chose human channels, human intellect and experience, through which to pour out his truth to all men. Wondrous gift of God to man is his inspired Word.

By inspiration of the Scriptures we mean the divine guidance of those who wrote the record. There is a sense in which there were many authors and a sense in which there was one author. John and Luke and Matthew and Isaiah and others wrote separate books, yet the Holy Spirit was the guiding author of all the books.

While we may not know the process through which the writers were given inspired guidance, we do know that it was wrought through their experience of God.

Moses in the wilderness with God, Isaiah in the temple, Paul in prison, John on the Isle of Patmos, all experienced the presence of God. They yielded to God's control and God accomplished his purpose through them. So with the others who wrote the Word. God breathed into them his Spirit and they wrote as he directed. In their experience the same essential elements were involved that are present in every Christian experience. But God had a special purpose to be accomplished through them, and that called for special guidance.

(c) The third factor that makes the Scriptures a reliable guide in matters of religion and church polity is what we may call illumination. The Bible must be studied. It must be interpreted. For that task we need Spirit-led minds. By illumination we mean the guiding presence of the Spirit of God with the one who studies and interprets his Word. When we waited to view the statue of Lee we had first to get the keeper of the key to unlock the door and admit us to the room. There is One who keeps the key to God's Word. He is the One who inspired the writing of it, and he stands at the door to admit to a true understanding of that Word any who will come to him. The Book is a cold, lifeless record until the Spirit guides us to the presence of the living Christ, who awaits us within, at the very center of the Book. Once we have followed the Spirit to find God in his Word we will earnestly seek to have him lead us on that we may increasingly know God. That is the way Christian experience vitalizes Bible study.

(2) There are also three lines of evidence that support the claim that the Bible is the Word of God.

(a) The first is its unity. It contains sixty-six books, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament. They were written during a period that lasted well over a thousand years. Consequently they were composed under greatly varying circumstances. Yet there is unity in the Bible. You may cut in anywhere and you will find the stream of progressive revelation that is fulfilled in Christ. That unifies the Scriptures and is evidence that the Bible is of divine origin. It would be impossible for this unity to be attained through mere human contrivance over such a long period.

(b) Another evidence that the Bible is God's inspired Word is seen in its preservation through the centuries. In every generation it has had enemies who have gone the length of human ingenuity to discount and destroy it. The attacks against it have ranged all the way from indifference and disbelief to organized effort against it. Yet it has been preserved through the ages.

The fact that the Book of the Law was found in 621 B.C., after it had been lost for many years, indicates that Jehovah was safeguarding his Word. Many times since it has seemed that the safety of the Scriptures hung by a thread. Tischendorf found scraps of a very old copy of the Bible in a monastery at Sinai. When the monks suspected the value of his discovery he experienced great difficulty in getting it from them for study. Yet after he secured it he found that it was one of the most valuable of all the ancient manuscripts of the Scriptures.

When the flames roared in the fire at St. Paul's Cross in the early part of the sixteenth century[1] many thousands of copies of the Bible were used as fuel. The English

[1]From about 1526-1528.

translations were being brought over to England from the continent and the churchmen did their best to destroy them. They were determined that the Bible should not be put into the hands of the common people. They would burn every copy printed. But the flames died to ashes and the ashes were blown by the wind over the heads of the enemy. And the copies of the Bible printed in English were borne by the Spirit of God into the hands and homes of the peasants of England. Yes, God's Spirit directed the writing of the Word, and he has preserved it from destruction through the ages. Truly it is his Word.

The evidence of the preservation of the Bible through the centuries may be questioned by some. They may say that other books have been preserved over a long period of time. They may cite the writings of Homer, Plato, and others. But we call attention to two distinguishing facts: In the first place, none of these other books that we have preserved from antiquity was composed over such a long period of time and by so many writers—how easily some of these sixty-six books might have been irrecoverably lost. In the second place, no other book has had so many enemies seeking its destruction as the Bible has faced through the generations. When we consider the many efforts that have been made to destroy it we marvel that we have it today. Those efforts have not ceased. Its enemies are legion today. The attacks vary from generation to generation, but the enemies of the Bible persist.[2]

(c) A third line of evidence that supports the claim of the Bible to be the Word of God is the response that

[2]A very helpful book that should be in every Christian's library is "How We Got Our Bible," by J. Peterson Smyth.

it evokes from us, the influence that it exerts over men. When Isaiah stood in the temple, entranced by his vision of God, he cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."[3] That has been the experience of thousands upon thousands who have looked into the revelation recorded in the Scriptures. With the eye of faith they have seen God, and they have seen their need of him and his power to answer that need. George Whitefield said that he traced his conversion to the influence of a book that Charles Wesley handed him, the title of which was "The Life of God in the Soul of Man." As he read it he came face to face with the challenge of Jesus, "Ye must be born again." The result was that he made his surrender to Christ, his life was transformed, he preached that text and the Gospel of Christ to hundreds of thousands and thousands were converted.

That is the story of the effect of the Bible on the believer. It always works that way when it is taken on the conditions that it establishes for itself. It successfully refutes the claim of the cynic and unbeliever that the Bible is merely a human book—good literature, but nothing more. Books that are only human do not transform men's lives.

We should make the distinction between the three factors that make the Bible a trustworthy source of our doctrines, and the three evidences that it is the inspired Word of God. The three factors are the three ways in which God speaks to man through the Scriptures; the three evidences prove to us that it is God, and not man,

[3]Isaiah 6: 5.

speaking in the Bible. An illustration may be found in the use of electricity as power in your home. Three factors that make the current available to you may be found in the water-driven wheel at the falls of the river, in the dynamo that uses the water power in grasping the electricity from the air, and in the cable that brings the current to your home. Three evidences that the wires have electricity in them may be found in the use of the telephone, or radio, when the voice of a friend is heard from a great distance; in the use of the light bulbs when the room is flooded with light; or in the use of the electric heater, when we are warmed by the heat that comes from the current.

2. *Experience.*

It is in this connection that we see that Christian experience becomes in a very real sense a source of doctrine. When we analyze our experience of Christ we find source material for doctrines. We repented of our sin and trusted in Christ. Thus arise the doctrines of repentance and faith. We are conscious of having been saved by Christ, and thus arise the doctrines of forgiveness, justification, regeneration and adoption. And so on through the list of beliefs. Someone will say, "But we learn of these from the Bible." Indeed we do. Yet we find them in experience too. It is something like this: we know these truths as laid down in the Bible, but we never possess them until we find them in experience. At one time Israel was called upon to possess her possessions. She had not realized her control of what God had given her. So with us in possessing divine truth. We have it in the Scriptures and yet it is not ours in a

real sense until we possess it in our consciousness under the control of the Spirit of Christ.

The Bible holds for us an inexhaustible treasury of truth. In Christian experience we increasingly grasp that truth. God's revelation of himself is complete in Christ, but our appropriation of that revelation is never finished. All truth is in God. In Christian experience we may grow eternally in truth, yet never exhaustively possess it.

III. Authority.

We need now to raise the question of authority in the Christian religion. Some Christian bodies put the authority altogether in the church, as the Roman Catholic Church. Others recognize no authority in the church, or in the Bible, but simply in the individual member, or professing Christian. The Unitarians are of this type. Then there are denominations that accept the Scriptures as authoritative. Baptists come in this group. Their position is that the Bible is the final authority, because it is God's message. The "thus saith the Lord" note gives to the Bible its authority.

1. *One of the marks of the authority of the Bible is its sufficiency.*

There is enough truth in its sixty-six books for all religious purposes. Truths of God are revealed in nature and may be discovered and stated by man. Science and philosophy discover truths that point to God. But they are fragmentary truths as far as religious purposes are concerned. The Scriptures give the record of God's revelation of himself to guide man in his search for that which his soul needs. We turn to these Scriptures and

find Christ in them, and in Christ we find God. Therefore they prove by the results in us to have sufficient authority for our religious needs.

There are three phases of this authority that indicate its sufficiency. The first is the knowledge of God that is given. Were an artist to attempt to put on canvas the Christian conception of God the Bible would speak with authority concerning what should go into the picture and what should be left out. When the minister attempts to paint word pictures of God the Bible speaks with authority concerning what he shall say and what he shall not say.

Again, the authority of the Bible has to deal with the matter of discipline of the life of the one who chooses to serve God. In his choice to serve God he has surrendered the right to choose at random by-paths in which he shall walk. He is to take the path that the Bible points out to him. When the Bible speaks concerning the discipline of his life he *must* obey.

There is authority also concerning our relations to men. Here again it is sufficient. It is the command to carry the message of God to others. It is the commission to evangelize the world, to try to lead all men to Christ. The first decision to serve God involves acceptance of God's authority as sufficient and final in each of these three ways.

2. *The other general mark of the authority of the Bible is its certainty.*

It proposes to lead us to God. By following it we have actually found God. So we conclude that when it speaks of God it speaks with a note of certainty. When the voice from heaven came in answer to Christ's prayer,

as recorded in the twelfth chapter of John, some thought that it thundered. Others surmised that an angel was speaking to Jesus. But the disciples knew that it was God's voice speaking to the Son. They had accepted the authority of Christ as the supreme revelation of God and now the voice of God came with all certainty to them.

We shall reserve the question of the authority of a Baptist church for a later chapter.

An illustration here may be drawn from astronomy. It is the account of the discovery of a planet. The planet Uranus was found to be out of position according to previous calculations. In their attempt to account for this phenomenon astronomers set up the hypothesis that there was another planet that was so affecting Uranus by the force of gravity as to throw it out of line. They charted the course of the planet that they thought was out there in space and they found that it should appear at a certain time and in a certain position. At the time and in the direction anticipated in their chart they trained their telescopes and observed for the first time the planet which they named Neptune. When they saw it with their eyes they knew of a certainty that their chart was correct. So it is with the Bible. For the unbeliever it is but a good book. But to the believer it speaks with certainty, for he has followed its directions and has found God.

Chapter II

GOD

What does God mean to you? That is an all-important question. Too many of us pass it up with a gesture, saying, "That is too vague and abstract for me." We need to face it frankly and courageously. All too often we have had the picture in our minds of God as an old man with long, white, flowing beard, sitting upon a throne with a sceptre in his hand, issuing commands by which the universe is controlled. It may be that we got such a conception in our childhood days. But if we have grown to maturity it is high time we were giving some definite consideration to our conception of God, that he may hold the great place in our lives that he should have.

The idea of God has ever been a formative principle in religion. Tell me what God means to you and I can tell you what your religion is. Our conception of God is the basis upon which we build our doctrinal system. It behooves every Christian to make sure that he has some definite conviction concerning the place and power of God in his life. It may be that the greatest contribution that Baptists have made, or can make, to doctrinal thinking is their teaching concerning God.

I. The Existence of God.

1. *Assumed in the Bible.*

Is there a God? If we take the approach of the Bible to the existence of God the question will not be raised. There it is assumed. "In the beginning God. . . ."

On that platform all revelation is given. The question of the nature and character of God is raised, but never of the existence of God.

2. *Philosophical proofs.*

The philosopher seeks to prove the existence of God by reasoning from evidence that appeals to the intellect. Five kinds of philosophical proof may be suggested.

(1) Cosmological proof—reasoning from the effect back to the cause. I see a gash in the side of a tree, perhaps half the trunk has been torn away. As I look at it I reason that something caused it. The only cause that I can think of is lightning. So I look upon the universe and wonder what caused it. The only cause that I can think of is God.

(2) Teleological proof—reasoning from the design to the designer. I gaze upon a great and beautiful building and wonder who planned it. Of one thing I am certain, it didn't spring up out of the ground by accident. Some intelligent being planned it and built it for a purpose. So I look upon a great and beautiful universe. An intelligent being must have planned it and created it for a purpose. That being is God.

(3) Anthropological proof—reasoning from the nature of man to an infinite creator and ruler. I gaze intently upon a man as he makes a watch. As I think of the marvelous mechanism of the watch I begin to think of the more marvelous mind of the man who makes it. So as I think of the wondrous nature of man I begin to reason that there must be a more wondrous being who made man. Surely it takes an infinite God to produce such a being as man.

(4) Ontological proof—reasoning from man's intuitive idea of God to a God to correspond to that idea. Wherever man is found he has some conception of God. The few individuals who claim not to believe in the existence of God are but the exceptions to prove the rule. We haven't yet found a tribe, or nation, or race of people who do not believe that there is a God. Surely this is not accidental. The smallest baby instinctively cries for mother. The most primitive man cries out for God. There is a God to answer that cry.

(5) Moral proof—reasoning from man's innate recognition of the difference between right and wrong to the infinite standard of right, or righteousness. Surely there must be a righteous God to produce even the rudiments of righteousness in man.[1]

3. *Proof in Christian experience.*

Thus far Christian experience goes and farther. These are conclusions drawn from inference. The Christian who has experienced the saving grace of Christ knows beyond a peradventure that there is a God. These arguments from philosophy he gladly accepts, but they are at best of secondary importance. The knowledge that he has is vital and certain. Does a child question the existence of his father, or does a husband question the existence of his wife? The vital relationship makes the question of existence absurd. So it is with Christian experience. Our relationship with God is so real and vital that to raise the question of his existence seems absurd.

[1]See Mullins, "The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression," pp. 124-136.

II. The Essence of God.

We think for a few minutes of the essence of God. The distinction here is not of the essential and non-essential in the ordinary acceptance of those terms, but of the nature and moral character of God. Our study right now is to answer the question, what is God?

1. *God is Spirit.*

By this we mean that he is not a body, he does not have form. He is independent of space and time. This it was that Jesus was seeking to impress upon the Samaritan woman's mind when he said, "God is spirit." Not in any special place or time are we to worship God, but in the contact of spirit with spirit. God can and will meet the worshiper in a temple, or on a mountain; but it will not be in the temple or mountain as such, physically conceived, but in the attitude of soul.

The importance of the spirituality of God may be seen by contrast. Religions that do not emphasize the spiritual nature of God easily drift into immorality and sensuality in worship, easily fall into polytheism, and reduce the gods to the level of man or below. The greatest realization of the spirituality of God is to be found in the Christian's fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

There are two important aspects of God's nature implied in the word *spirit*. The first is in the fact that as spirit he is independent of space. That means that he is omnipresent. Space cannot hold him, yet he dwells in space. We dwell in space and are restricted by it, because we live in bodies. But God has no body, or form. Space is the realm in which bodies move. God, being spirit, pervades space and transcends it. He is everywhere, and beyond. His dwelling is without limitation.

The other is implied in the fact that God as spirit is independent of time. Thus he is eternal. As space is the realm of location of bodies, so time is the realm of endurance of bodies. That which is physical undergoes growth and decay. A form endures for a period of time. God, being spirit and having no form, has no such limitation. He can and does enter time, but he also transcends time. A thousand years with him are but as a day, and a day as a thousand years. In other words, he dwells in eternity, considering time only a phase of his vast creation.

2. *God also is power.*

This follows closely upon the conception of God as spirit. If spirit is not limited by time or space it certainly has that element that we call power. This was probably the primitive conception of God. The first word for God used in Genesis is a Hebrew word that denotes great power, or the Mighty One.

There are several aspects of God's being and activity involved in this conception. One is that he is infinite. He is all-powerful. There is no limit upon him save as he limits himself. This applies to all the attributes of God, as well as his power. In every way that we can think of God he is beyond all limitation.

Out of his infinite power he creates all things. The spiritual as well as the material universe are his work. All things not himself have come to be through his creative act. The Christian has little difficulty with the fact of creation of the physical universe, because he lives in a realm of spiritual realities that radiate from Christ. Christian experience is an act of divine creation, that makes it easier to understand the first creation.

We use the power of God in nature so commonly that we do not fully appreciate it. A few years ago it was reported that a professor in an agricultural school in one of our Western states experimented with the power in a growing squash. He fitted a harness of strap iron over the squash in such a way that, as the vegetable grew, the expanding iron harness would register the strength that the squash exerted upon it. Thus harnessed the growing squash lifted, at different stages of its growth, weights of five hundred, eleven hundred and eventually of three thousand pounds. All this power was made possible through the connection of the squash with the vine, and of the vine with the earth—and in it all it was power that God planted.

A third implication here is that God is sovereign. He rules over his creation. He is absolute in his power and control. There is none to stand on an equality with him. He dwells apart in a relation that none but God can know.

Yet another implication is the providence of God. This infinite Creator, Sovereign Ruler, cares for his creation and provides for his creatures. Along with the lofty conception of God's power we must put the tremendous fact that he holds his power as a guaranty of the welfare of his children.

3. *God is a personal being.*

A person is a self-conscious and self-determining being. By so much is a person distinguished from a thing. To be self-conscious is to exercise thought, feeling and will, and to know that such is being done at the time. As I sit here I am thinking of home and wife and baby. The thought stirs my emotions and I become anxious to see

them. I realize anew how much I love them. As my feeling grows more intense I decide to quit work and go home to see them. To have such an experience and reflect upon it is to have conscious activity. In some such conception is God a personal being. He exercises his infinite mind, knowing all things. He loves, he has emotions. He makes choice, exercising his infinite will.

In the free exercise of his will God is a self-determining being. He is absolutely free. He is not limited save as he chooses to be limited. He not only determines his own course, but he has the power of determining all things and all persons.

Here, again, Christian experience adds a word of corroboration. We trust God, believe in him, pray to him, seek his counsel, love him, worship him, and we find that he entrusts certain tasks to us, answers prayer, gives counsel, and gives abundant proof of his love for us. That experience can only come between persons. Because God is a person he can make himself known to us. Because we are persons we can receive the revelation. One person can love, understand and choose the companionship of other persons, and thus we have personal relations. Christian experience is always in terms of personal relations. This could not be if God were less than a person.

III. God In Character.

1. *God is love.*

As the Christian reflects upon his experience the conviction grows with him that God must have been moved by a great love in accomplishing his salvation. Nothing else can account for it. And it is too great to come from

any source other than God himself. It must inhere in his very character. "God is love." That is probably the first thought that we have of God.

How shall we define this love of God? It is God's gift of himself to those who need him. John 3: 16 gives us the divine motive in making possible the gift of eternal life. God is ever seeking to give himself to those who can and will receive him. There was a time when Israel said that God had forsaken his people, that he did not love them any longer. But Jehovah's answer through his prophet was a comparison of the greatest expression of human love with God's love. Can a mother forget her nursing child that she should not love her own son? She may forget and human love may waste away, but the love of God for man abides.[2]

The devoted mother gives herself to her child. In like manner, though in an infinitely greater measure, does God give himself to man.

It may be well to draw a distinction right here in the reach of God's love to man. There is a very real sense in which he sheds his love abroad to all, and all men benefit by it. In his beneficent rule of the universe he blesses the human race out of his bounty. His sunlight beautifies the day, multiplies the harvest, scatters disease and darkness, and in multitudes of ways adds incalculable values to the treasury of man. So it is with the timely rains, the seasonal changes, the rich deposits in the earth, and so on. In these blessings all share. That is the broad reach of his love. It also has a deep reach. The man who will open his life to God will experience the power of that love to the depth of his soul.

[2]Isaiah 49: 14, 15.

The experience of Zacchaeus with Jesus was typical. Jesus came into his home and his life, and as they talked together Zacchaeus said to Jesus, "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold." It was the spirit of Jesus getting hold of this publican, causing him to think in the same direction in which Jesus thought—that of giving. Thus does love work. Thus does God work in the human heart.

After all is said and done we come back to this thought as the essence of the Christian religion. It is the love of God that moves him to give himself to man, that draws man to him and turns man's life in the same channel of giving to others. It is this that distinguishes Christianity from other religions, and that lends to it the possibility of growth by an infinite pattern.

2. *God is righteous.*

A second element in the character of God is his righteousness. This word describes character that conforms to a standard that is right. With God it is righteousness that is raised to an infinite degree, and that inheres in his very nature. It is unthinkable that there should be a standard outside God's nature to which he must conform. Through our experience we know him as the Supreme Being. There is none equal to him or greater than he. And so in that he does all things in perfect consistence with his nature he is righteous.

Though God saves the sinner he is not unjust in doing so. The sin must be removed to satisfy the divine nature that cannot tolerate sin. His compassion for lost men is the expression of his love. That is what is sometimes

called redemptive righteousness. It is the uncompromising nature of God yearning for the perfection in character of his highest creation, man.

The righteousness of God may be seen in three ways: (1) Righteousness as faithfulness. He is loyal to right and truth in all that he says and does. The Psalmist prayed, "In thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness" (Psalm 143: 1). And again, "I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation" (Psalm 40: 10). (2) As purity. He is absolutely pure, there is no sin or defect in him. The absolute standard by which we measure righteousness is God's character. (3) As justice. God judges all equitably. His sovereign control is without partiality, prejudice, or blemish of any sort.

There is a suggestion in the righteousness of God that explains the volitional nature of man. We are not dealing with the doctrine of man here, but the suggestion may enable us to get a clearer understanding of the character of God. Man bears the image of God. That accounts for his power of will. God has such a power of will, but with him it is infinitely free. He chooses, thinks, acts according to his own desire. There is no limitation upon him, save as he has imposed it. Any self-imposed limitation is in perfect conformity with his character. Hence his will is always righteous, as well as free.

3. *God is truth.*

The love of God deals with his emotional nature, his righteousness concerns his volitional nature, and the element of truth presents his rational character. The truth of God in the intellectual realm is what the righteousness of God is in the moral realm. He is all-wise, omniscient,

Truth is conformity to a plan that holds. Truth in astronomy is the plan by which the stars and planets move in their relations one to another. It is on the basis of that plan that astronomers are able to predict the exact position of any known body in the heavens at any given future time. Thus the Copernican system is truth in astronomy, rather than the old Ptolemaic. That plan came from the God who created the heavens and the earth. He devised it and put it in operation. Man discerns it, and so acquires truth in the realm of astronomy.

So it is in any realm. The chemist discovers the plan by which elements are related, and so he can predict results when conditions are known. The physicist discovers the plan by which energy, force and motion work. The plan that holds is the truth in that realm. So it is in the larger sphere of the relations of man with God. The standard is God's plan, which traces back ultimately to God's mind. God is truth. Truth inheres in him. He is the source, the ground and the object of all knowledge. Any line of truth, if followed to its ultimate source, will lead to God. And so the standard of truth is God.

4. *God is holy.*

The holiness of God involves his perfection. It is the love, righteousness and truth of God conceived as perfect. It is transcendent perfection. There is no power in man to comprehend it. That is the reason the holiness of God is always rather abstract, hard to define. It is the element of the moral character of God that places him infinitely beyond us. Yet he enters the human sphere for the purpose of blessing man. So when we think of God as holy we are thinking of the One who is

infinitely perfect in all his attributes, and who reveals himself to man for a beneficent purpose.

IV. The Unity and Trinity of God.

1. *God is one.*

Here we come to one of the most fundamental principles of religion. There have been conflicting views held among non-Christians, that appear to us to be erroneous.

Many, throughout the ages, have held to a philosophical dualism, which says that there are two eternal and equal powers contending for supremacy. They have been thought of as the good and evil spirits. This is the principle of the Zoroastrian religion. But it doesn't lead anywhere. It offers no solution.

Polytheism has had a more widespread influence. It is the belief in many gods. Lower forms of religion, such as may be found in Africa and other mission fields, are polytheistic. The basis of such a religion is usually superstition. To the enlightened mind it is not at all satisfactory. The only solution of the problems of life that it offers is in terms of a varying number of gods, with varying powers and functions, and with never-ending conflicts between each other. This is no solution at all, for the mind of man requires unity.

In seeking unity another false view has arisen. It is called pantheism. This is the belief that God is all, and all is God. It makes nature and God, the universe and God, one and the same. It offers no way of distinguishing God from nature.

The Christian position emphasizes the unity of God, and distinguishes God from nature. It is called mono-

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theism. God is one. We may draw three lines of evidence to support our belief.

All of nature indicates that one God created and controls the universe and life. There is harmony, symmetry, agreement everywhere. The perfume of the violet, the texture of the leaf, and the orbit of the star appear to us to have come from one infinite mind, the Creator.

The evidence in the Bible is abundant. Israel was trained to love and worship God as one. His name was given as Jehovah, which signifies his absolute existence. There were many manifestations, but they always pointed to the one true and living God. And in the New Testament the evidence points unmistakably to one God. Jesus came to reveal God, and he insisted that he and the Father were one. He did not reveal God as though he were an additional or different being. He is the God whom he reveals.

Christian experience witnesses to one God. We know a Saviour who saves us from sin, a Lord who controls our lives, a God who created us and who enters into fellowship with us. He is one God. There is no difference between the grace that saves and the grace that sustains. There is a unity in Christian experience that witnesses to the unity of God.

2. *We know God as triune.*

This brings us to one of the unfathomable mysteries of Christianity. Not all of our beliefs can be reduced to simple form. This is one doctrine that is essential, yet hard to explain. This Being, who is the only true and living God, is known to us as three persons in one essence. The term *person* is not adequate to make the distinction, yet it is the best that we have. The difficulty is just

there, in finding human terms that will adequately describe the character, nature and functions of God. We simply have to do the best we can with the language that we have.

In the Old Testament there is no developed doctrine of the Trinity. God is known there as the one who creates, sustains, and rules. There are manifestations, but only one God. In the New Testament the doctrine of the Trinity is developed. God the Father is revealed in the Son, and God the Holy Spirit makes the revelation complete and effective. Yet God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are but the three personal manifestations of the one God. They are one. Thus it is not tritheism, three gods, but tri-unity, three persons in the one Godhead.

One word remains to be said here. This doctrine has great practical value if we accept it by faith. But the more we try to explain it intellectually the more speculative it becomes and the greater difficulty we have. Let us be content to emphasize the unity of God, accepting by faith the fact that he is made known to us through a three-fold personal manifestation.

Chapter III

MAN AND SIN

The motto of an ancient philosopher was, "Know thyself." With that he challenged his pupils and contemporaries. It challenges us today. Next to the doctrine of God comes the doctrine of man. And they should come in that order. If we would know man let us first study God. Then, close upon our knowledge of God and man will come the study of that which separates them, sin.

I. Man.

We come first to examine our beliefs concerning man. Whence did he come, or what do we know about his origin? What is he, or what do we know about his nature? Whither is he bound, or what do we know about the immortality of human life? These are the primary questions that interest us.

1. *The origin of man.*

Whence did man come? The Scriptures answer this question with the word "creation."[1] By this is meant that God brought man into being. Just how he did it the record does not say, except that he made him out of the dust of the ground and imparted to him spiritual life from himself. He made a man and a woman, and from them all the human race is descended.

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[1]Genesis 1: 27 and 2: 7.

This problem has interested man throughout the ages, yet history is sadly confused when it comes to answering the question of man's origin. As no individual has recorded in his memory the experience of his birth, so the human race cannot recall from its history the story of its origin. Philosophy has faced the question and has suggested many answers. But the answer of any given system of philosophy depends upon the major premise, or assumption, upon which it builds. Materialism takes matter as reality and explains everything in the light of that. Thus man came from matter—just how, is another question that has been answered in many ways by materialists. Idealism takes mind as reality, and says that man is its product. And so on through the philosophies of the past and present. There is no definite answer available on which all types of philosophy can agree.

Modern science claims the right to say a word about the origin of man, and that word is evolution. This is not a treatment of science and so we shall dismiss the matter as briefly as possible. There are theories today grouped under this one word, evolution, that run all the way from the teaching that man came into being as a chance product of matter, to the doctrine that evolution was simply the method that God used in creation. Between these extremes are almost as many theories as theorists. The controversy, in the main, has been between the group that holds that chance explains the origin of man, and those who hold that God as creator is the only adequate explanation. It should be pointed out that much of the evolutionary hypothesis, as it is commonly discussed, is in the realm of philosophy rather than science. It is a sort of philosophy of science.

It is built more upon an assumption, or philosophical premise, than upon established fact. There is no pure science no basis of unity and definiteness available, save as we may accept the assumption that a group of philosophers of science may propose. At the present it seems evident that science cannot explain the ultimate origin of man.

The Bible sets forth the claim that man came into being as the result of God's creative act. That is the most important fact about the origin of man, as far as religion is concerned. Man is the crown and goal of all God's creation. All that came before led up to man and must serve him. In him God accomplished his highest creation. To him God committed the task of subduing the earth, exercising dominion over it. Man is still working at that task.

The pattern by which man was created is given in the Scriptures as the divine image. That, of course, refers to the spiritual, rather than the physical nature of man, for God has no body or form. It is in the active exercise of this divine image that man holds dominion over nature.

Christian experience offers the opportunity of reasoning from the transformation of life, the rebirth of the spirit of man, wrought by the Spirit of God, back to the creation of man. To the Christian the fact of Christian experience is indisputable. We begin there. It is an experience of spiritual creation. It is accomplished in the spiritual nature of man, in which he bears the divine image. It is in that realm that man recognizes a kinship with God, a yearning for God. When man came into being he stepped forth into a new world. Through

the experience of grace the Christian steps forth into a new realm of spiritual realities. The analogy is close enough for the Christian to have no difficulty over the question of his origin. As he received his new life from God he received his being from God.

This use of the Bible and Christian experience gives us an adequate answer to the modern trend of thinking that would reduce man to a mechanistic or materialistic level. It is positive, definite, and founded upon fact. Yet it leaves science to pursue its problem in its legitimate field.

2. *Nature—What man is.*

Man is a physical being. That is, he has a body. According to the account of creation in Genesis man was first given a physical form, and then he was made a living soul. Science has made great strides in the study of man as a physical organism. Nor have we learned all yet. Wonderful indeed is this human body. But from the standpoint of religion, rather than of science, we raise the question of the value of the body. It is the temple of the spirit. There is a delicate, yet indefinable relationship obtaining between the spirit of man and his body. The Christian seeks to keep the body in the best possible condition in order that it may be used to the greatest advantage of the spirit.

Man is also a spiritual being. He has a body and he has a soul. It is in that soul that he bears the divine image. We see this in three aspects of man's spiritual nature. The first is the intellect, the understanding mind. Man is a thinking, a rational being. That is, he can concentrate his mind on a problem and solve it. He can think in retrospect, and thus exercise memory. He

can think in the present, and thus give attention. He can think in the future, and thus dwell in imagination. This is a characteristic of man's spiritual being that is patterned after him who knows all—past, present and future.

Another aspect of man's spiritual nature is his emotions. He loves those with whom he finds that he has an affinity of spirit. That love is capable of being aroused until it becomes flaming compassion when a loved one is in distress. Man is jealous, and that jealousy is capable of being excited to an intense degree when his rights are disturbed. We speak of the emotions of man as coming from his heart. The ancients thought the emotions, affections, were located in the stomach. That is the reason we have in our King James' versions in some passages the word "bowels" used for "tender mercies." In the Greek one word is used for both. We think now of the emotions as being of the spiritual nature of man, and the heaving of the breast, or other physical accompaniments of emotional states, as indicating the intricate relation between the spirit and the body, not as indicating the location in the body of the emotions. As God by nature is love, so man is endowed with emotions, and they are of his spiritual nature.

Again, man bears the divine image in his spiritual nature in that he is a free moral agent, with the privilege of exercising contrary choice. He has the right and the power to choose between good and evil. There are two facts here that deserve emphasis. One is that man is free. His will is free. He may choose to follow a certain path, or he may choose not to follow it. Of course, it is to be understood that his freedom is not absolute, but

limited, for man is a finite being. Only God is absolutely free.

The other fact is that as a free moral being man can discern between right and wrong. We sometimes call this conscience. It is a part of man's spiritual being. He intuitively distinguishes good from evil. His moral education is the structure that he builds upon this foundation. It is the characteristic in man that is patterned after righteousness in God.

In all of this that sets forth the spiritual nature of man we see something of man's capacity for God. In his intellectual, emotional and volitional nature he bears the image of God. In the same characteristics of his soul does he exhibit his capacity for God. The Christian experiences God dwelling in his conscious life. As the airplane has a place for the pilot; as the husband has capacity in his life for the love, affections and interests of the wife; as the child has capacity in his conscious life for the parent, so has man capacity for God. He can experience the indwelling Spirit of God.

A note should be added here to call attention to another view of the nature of man. The position set forth above is that man has a twofold nature, body and spirit. There are many who hold that man has a threefold nature, body, spirit and soul. The latter view distinguishes between the spirit as nature and the soul as personality. Some make the distinction of body, and animal spirit (a lower form of spirit), and the soul. This is a more intricate and speculative way of dealing with the problem. Our position seems more practical.

3. *Immortality.*

It is not enough to study man as we find him in the present order. We cannot be content to think of him as a passing shadow upon the screen of time. The question inevitably comes, what of man beyond this life? Is the activity of the soul of man in this life all that there is of the soul? For answer we may look into two or three lines of evidence.

Science has no definite answer. It has no apparatus for experimenting with life after death. A few years ago a great scientist proposed to set up a delicate instrument on which, or with which, the spirits of the dead might communicate with us, and we with them. To this day that instrument remains unused. So it is with all the efforts of science to deal with life beyond death. It is a problem outside the realm of science.

Philosophy has ever considered this one of its problems. From Plato to the present day great thinkers have set forth considerations that support the belief in a future life. This is not the time or the place to present any of them. There have arisen other great thinkers who have refuted these considerations and have argued that there is no life beyond this. As long as this remains the case philosophy cannot give an adequate and final answer to the question. There is one line of evidence that arises from philosophy that has great weight in spite of all attacks, and that is the intuitive longing in man for immortality. It is even stronger than that, it is a universal belief in immortality. The vast majority of people in every age, so far as our knowledge goes, have accepted without proof the belief in the existence of the soul beyond death. The philosophers who have denied

it have rather been the exceptions to prove the rule. Every religion of the world has held this as one of its central tenets.

The Scriptures have a great deal to say in support of the belief in immortality. The Old Testament has a very definite doctrine on the subject. It may be found in the solution of the problem of the righteous and the wicked (see Psalms 17, 37, 49, 73 and others). The wicked may prosper here, but the righteous will have their full reward hereafter; the inequalities of this life will be straightened out in the life to come. It may also be seen in the conception of Sheol, which is very prominent in the Psalms, Job and other books in the Old Testament. Sheol was conceived to be the place, or state, of departed spirits. It may also be found in the references to the resurrection. There were some instances of the dead being raised, and Job expressed a strong conviction concerning his own resurrection (see Job 19).

The New Testament establishes it upon the basis of the resurrection of Christ. He brought from death a twofold guaranty: one is that there is a life beyond the grave that every soul may look forward to; and the other is that Christians will have fellowship with him beyond the grave. He promised his disciples that he would prepare a dwelling for them with the Father, and that he would receive them into his presence. Now his resurrection seals that promise. The proofs of his resurrection we may consider in our last chapter. It is enough here to say that the books of the New Testament are one in accepting it as a fact and as a basis of Christian doctrine. Paul uses very plain and definite language in

building all hope and doctrine on the resurrection of Jesus.

The witness of Christian experience here is to verify the claims of the New Testament. Christ has made good all the promises that have called for fulfilment thus far. Our conviction is that he will not fail us in any that are yet to be fulfilled. The New Testament has led us into realities that we have experienced and cannot doubt. There is no reason to believe that the part of its leading that we have not experienced is myth. Rather does our assurance take the form of knowledge when we build our hopes of the future on the experiences of the present and past. Man is immortal. Death opens the door to a vast dwelling that eternity shall not consume.

II. Sin.

It is in connection with the doctrines of God and man that we should consider sin. Between the Creator and his highest creation looms this cloud of evil. It shadows man and hides God from his view. Before we can go farther in the study of our doctrines we must seek an understanding of sin.

1. *The fall of man.*

In the second and third chapters of Genesis we have the description of man's creation and his state before the fall. He was created free from sin. That is, he was pure and innocent. That does not mean that he was less than man and so did not reach mature manhood until he sinned. He was as much man before he sinned as he was after. Neither does it mean that he was more than man, that he fell to the human level. He was never

omniscient. He was never more than the man that he is now.

How long he continued in this state of innocence and loveliness we have no way of knowing, nor does it matter. The fact of importance is that in that pure condition he had fellowship with God. That was because of two things. One was the fact that man was made in the image of God. He is a creature like unto the Creator. There is much in common between them, though in no sense is man on a level with God. The other fact that made the communion pleasing to both was the absence of sin. There was a happy disposition in man toward God, and God was pleased with man. Now, the break came in the free exercise of man's will, which is a mark of the divine image in him. Man was tempted and he sinned. He had the privilege and power of resisting or yielding. God warned man and then left him to make his own choice. His choice was rebellion against God, and so he fell.

Man's fall was downward, from a high level of purity to a low level of impurity, from a high plane of fellowship with God to the valley of separation from God. Man's first sin was thus a breach of personal relations with God. It came as a temptation from without, permitted by God, but not ordained of God. Just where sin originated we have no way of knowing positively. The question leads us off into speculation. For all practical purposes it is enough that we know how it started in man. Sin continues as a breach of personal relations with God. The more we sin the wider that chasm becomes.

2. *Sin and the race.*

Sin is such that it pervades the whole race of man and the whole nature of man. That does not mean that man is altogether bad. There is some good inherent in every member of the race. There is also some sin in every member of the race. We have all sinned. When the first man and woman sinned they took a pollution into the stream of human life that goes on with the stream. Not all men are equally sinful, but all men have this pollution of sin in them. This is what is meant by racial depravity in sin.

Sin is hereditary. It plays upon the principle of the unity of the race. Man is a part of the race, not an isolated individual. Sin gets into the blood, into the stream of life. The hereditary transmission of traits of character has been demonstrated. Man is a physical-spiritual being, and as such is a child of the race. Sin operates in this combined constitution of man, and so is carried on from generation to generation. The Bible is very clear in this connection (see Psalms 51: 5; 53: 1-3; Romans 5: 12, 21; 1 Corinthians 15: 21, 22; Ephesians 2: 3). We are born with a sinful tendency, and we actually sin when we come into the realization of the capacity for sinning.

The consequences of sin are guilt and penalty. Guilt is the condemnation that rests upon the sinner as a result of his sin. It is the brand that marks him a sinner. He stands condemned before three tribunals: God, his fellow man, and himself. When he realizes the weight of his sin and stands self-condemned, the hope of his salvation grows brighter. Not all are equally condemned. There are degrees of guilt, as there are degrees of sin.

There are sins of weakness and sins of presumption, sins of partial and of entire opposition to God's will. (See Matt. 10: 15; Luke 12: 47, 48; John 19: 11; Rom. 2: 12; Psalm 19: 12; Matt. 12: 31.)

Penalty is the consequence of sin that the sinner must experience. It may come as a part of the operation of law, or it may come as the direct action of God. It takes many forms and comes in varying measure. We see it in the court room, the hospital, the charitable institution for the alleviation of poverty and suffering, the broken home, the ruined life, and in a multitude of places and experiences. But the full and final penalty of sin is death. "The wages of sin is death."[2] "Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death."[3] The conception of death in connection with sin is spiritual. It is the separation of the soul from God.

3. *Nature of sin.*

What is this matter of sin that we talk so much about? It might be a good exercise for the reader to pause right here, before reading farther, and try to formulate a brief definition of sin. Is it definite to you, or is it a vague something about which you are confused and hazy in your thinking? One of the chief tasks of the Christian is to learn to recognize sin, that he may avoid it, or overcome it. There are three aspects of sin that we need to emphasize.

In the first place, it is an act of rebellion against God. That describes the sin of Eve and Adam in Eden. God plainly told them not to eat of a certain tree in the garden. They disobeyed, rebelled against God, and ate of

[2]Romans 6: 23.
[3]James 1: 15.

the tree. What they did was sin as it was a violation of the authority of God. This is the phase of sin that John described with the words, "Sin is lawlessness."[4] One of the most common words used in the Bible to describe sin is transgression. That means a violation of law, overstepping the boundary that has been drawn about us by the authority of God.

There are many acts of sin, so many that they cannot be numbered or classified. But all of them have the element of rebellion, disobedience, transgression. If we know the will of God, and do it, we do not sin.

In the second place, it is a state of impurity. Sin is unholiness, unrighteousness, uncleanness, iniquity, defilement. The standard by which sin is measured is the very character of God. Man is made in the image of God and should so live that the character of God is reproduced in him. To live in a state below that level is sin. The degrees of sin run all the way from the first act of rebellion that defiled a holy character to the vast multitudes of sins that plunge human life hopelessly beyond the reach of God's holy love. Man cannot commit sin without having his character defiled by it. The unrepentant and unforgiven sinner lives in a state of sin. That state of uncleanness continually breeds acts of sin.

The sixth chapter of Genesis describes the extreme state of degradation in sin to which man may fall. "And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."[5] The state of sin, in all of its ungodliness and ugliness, is the natural consequence of sinning. Then it works in the reverse

[4]1 John 3: 4.
[5]Gen. 6: 5.

order—the state of moral depravity in sin inevitably produces deeds of sin. It is the law of growth that prevails. The murder recorded in the fourth chapter of Genesis and the moral depravity pictured in the sixth chapter are the natural fruit of the sowing of the seed of sin that is described in the third chapter.

In the Mosaic law the distinction is made between sins of ignorance and weakness on the one hand, and wilful sins on the other. But they are all sins and must be forgiven, for if they are not forgiven they are as a wedge between man and God, driving man farther and farther from God. That is the nature of sin. It separates us from God. The greater the burden of sin, the greater is the separation from God.

In his teaching Jesus placed primary emphasis upon the state of sin in which the unregenerate man lives. He went behind the deed to the motive. He said that a man whose heart is full of lust is already unclean, and one who hates his brother is already a murderer. Out of the fulness of a wicked heart come the works of wickedness.

This suggests the third aspect of sin. It is the attitude of unbelief. We may say that this is the breeder of all sin. When Jesus spoke of the convicting work of the Holy Spirit he grouped all sin under this one word, unbelief. "And he . . . will convict the world in respect of sin . . . because they believe not on me."[6] Thus the extreme of human sin is the attitude of distrust that rejects God's method of salvation through Christ.

Thus sin is an act of rebellion against the law of God; a state of uncleanness, unrighteousness, in which man

[6]John 16: 8, 9.

grows in godlessness; and an attitude of unbelief, in which man rejects God's plan of salvation through Christ. It is to be noted here that sin is always defined with reference to man's relation to God. The Psalmist was right when he said, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."[7] Sin is that which separates man from God.

Dr. S. D. Gordon's "Quiet Talks on Personal Problems" should be in every Christian's library. In the first chapter he points out that there are six sides of sin, which may be seen by studying the six words used in the Bible for sin. Here they are. (1) The word sin itself. It means missing the mark, failing to do that for which man was created, failing to do that which you aimed to do. (2) Transgression, which means going beyond the line that God has drawn along the path of your life. (3) Iniquity, that which is not equal, falling below the standard. (4) Wickedness, crookedness, not walking in a straight path. (5) Guile, which means sneakiness, trickiness, being one thing inside and trying to make others think you are something else. (6) Lawlessness, breaking God's law.

Then Dr. Gordon sets forth seven facts about sin. (1) Sin earns wages. There is a law of compensation in sin. (2) Sin pays wages. It is never bankrupt. (3) Sin insists on paying wages. We may try to cover it up, but sin will out. (4) Sin pays wages in kind. Think of Jacob. He deceived others, and in turn was sorely deceived. (5) Sin pays in installments. The payments begin at once, and run on. (6) Sin pays in full. (7) Every sin pays its own accounts. No sin is left out when the reckoning is made. "The wages of sin is death."

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[7]Psalm 51: 4.

Chapter IV

CHRIST THE MEDIATOR

God was not content to leave man in his sin and guilt. As the righteous and holy God he must allow man to exercise his free will with reference to sin, and he must leave sin to run its course according to its kind. The law of planting, growing and reaping operates in sin, and that sin is against God. Divine righteousness cannot tolerate it. Verily God hates sin. And as judge he must allow a just condemnation to remain. Yet God loves the sinner, and longs to save him from his sin and guilt. As the true mother loves her son and longs to see him come home, while at the same time she abhors his evil ways and will not let him carouse in sin at home; so God yearned to have man come back to him as son, yet he must come without his sin.

Man was not content to remain in sin. There was something in him that made him long for God. Though he wandered in the darkness of the midnight, he cried out for the light of a new day. Though he struggled in bondage he longed for, and looked for, deliverance. Man has ever been seeking God. The tragedy of it all is that sin has kept him in darkness and bondage. He could never find God unless God could find him.

So a plan was needed that would accomplish the deliverance of man from sin and restoration to divine fellowship. A mediator was needed, for God and man were estranged by sin. God's righteousness must be preserved

inviolate, and man's weakness and failure must be turned into victory over sin. God's love must have an adequate opportunity with man. Yet man's freedom must not be violated. Jesus Christ is the mediator. He meets all the requirements, fills all the needs, and accomplishes the maximum of divine-human power. How?

I. Son of God.

Since God took the initiative in the plan of salvation it is well for us to consider first the requirement that Jesus met as Son of God. Since man utterly failed in his efforts to overcome sin the Mediator must be more than man. Even if he could have saved himself with only human power, he would still fall short in saving others. Furthermore, if the reconciliation between man and God was to be complete God had to have an active part in the accomplishment of it.

1. *The pre-existence of Christ as Son of God.*

Jesus Christ was qualified to be the mediator between God and man because he was the eternal Son of God. Before he came in the flesh he existed as God. This is frequently set forth in the New Testament. Jesus spoke of his existence with the Father before the creation. John began his Gospel account with the existence of Christ with the Father, stating that Christ was God. Paul wrote that Christ emptied himself of his divine glory in order to become the Saviour of men.

It is also a common doctrine in the New Testament that Christ was active in the creation of the world and of man. He is the medium through which the creation was accomplished. Thus John writes, "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made

that was made."[1] And Paul says, "For by him were all things created."[2] And the author of Hebrews speaks of him as the Son through whom God made the worlds.[3]

Not only is he the one through whom creation was accomplished, but he is also the one through whom the universe is supported and controlled.[4] He is the rational power on which the world depends for control. Were he to withdraw his support the cosmos would revert to chaos, order would change to confusion, and dissolution and destruction would be inevitable.

2. *Incarnation.*

This infinite Christ came into the human race to reconcile man to God. He had to become human in order to save man. But he could not lay aside his deity. The mediator between God and man had to be a God-man. How this was accomplished cannot be fully explained. It is one of those mysteries that center in him. Matthew and Luke tell us that he was born of the virgin Mary by supernatural conception. John and Paul simply say that he became flesh, he took human form.

It is well for us to devote ourselves to the study of the deity and humanity of Christ, and if we experience difficulty in understanding how the two could be complete in one person we may be willing to let that rest on the basis of the mystical element in Christ. Some day we shall understand more than we do now.

3. *He claimed deity.*

There are some who hold that Jesus did not claim to be the Son of God. But that is to rule out the testimony

[1]John 1: 3.
[2]Col. 1: 16.
[3]Hebrews 1: 2.
[4]Read Col. 1: 17. The word "consist" means "stand together."

of the four Gospels. John 3: 16 is a definite and clear statement from Jesus about himself. He was speaking to Nicodemus about his relation to God and man, and John recorded the conversation. Again, Jesus referred to himself as "the Son" and God as "the Father" in a manner that made it very clear that he regarded his relation to the Father as unique. He used the expression "your Father" when talking to the disciples about God, but he said "my Father" when speaking of his relation to God. He told Philip that anyone that had seen him had seen the Father, for he and the Father were one.

On one occasion, some men brought a sick man to Jesus to be healed. When the Master saw him he said, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." Immediately there arose a murmuring objection among the scribes and Pharisees. They said Jesus was guilty of blasphemy, for no one can forgive sins but God. He understood what they were talking about and so he asked them whether they thought it would be easier to forgive the man his sins, or to heal him of his disease. Then, in order to prove to them that he had the power and authority of God to forgive sins, he healed the man forthwith. In other words, he accepted their proposition about his deity. They said only God can forgive sins. Without denying that he said that he would prove to them that he could forgive the man's sins. The only fair conclusion that they could draw was that he claimed to be divine, and that he had proved his claim.

On a certain sabbath Jesus cured a man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. The Jews complained that he was breaking the law governing the sabbath. He answered that he was doing the work of God, his Father.

At that they became furious, and sought to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath, but he also claimed to be equal with God. Whereupon Jesus cites four proofs of his deity. The first is the testimony of the Father in giving him authority to carry on his work. The second is the testimony of John the Baptist. The third is the witness of the works that he accomplished through his relation to the Father. And the fourth is the witness of the scriptures. These are all set forth in the fifth chapter of John.

One other instance may be cited in which Jesus claimed deity. He was on trial before the high priest. The priest put him on oath with the following challenge, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus' answer was, "Thou hast said." Now, it should be noted that the priest put Jesus on the strongest oath known to the Jewish court. He could not evade the question that was put to him in connection with that oath. His answer was to the point, and the priest accepted it as such. Jesus did claim to be the Son of God.

4. *Others claimed it for him.*

This accounts for the New Testament. The deity of Christ is at the very heart of it all. John said that he wrote his Gospel "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (20: 31). Peter, in his great confession, voiced the claim that he is the Son of God. Thomas addressed him, "My Lord and my God."

To that array of proof might be added the testimony of Christian experience. We cannot explain the fact that men are saved from their sin except on the basis of the

deity of Christ. There is a transformation of life, a new motive, and a new disposition, self-sacrificing service where there was selfishness. In short, there is a new life, and it radiates from Christ. It is inconceivable that he could exercise that power over men unless he were divine.

II. The Son of Man.

Christ also was qualified to be the mediator in that he became man. This was the only way in which God could enter saving relations with man. It could not be done by an arbitrary decree from the sovereign ruler. It had to come by God's dwelling in the race and getting down under the load of sin with man.

1. *Identified with the race.*

In Jesus God became man. Before the incarnation, God dealt with the race from without. In Christ as a member of the race he begins to deal with it from within. He takes up his residence with man. The infinite God becomes finite simply by accepting a human mother and coming into the world as a baby. Wonderful deed of divine self-humbling it is.

As a normal child he grew physically, mentally, and spiritually. He asked for no exceptions to the lot of man. He took the straight course through life. The child finds in Jesus a sympathetic friend, for he was a child once. The growing boy sees in Jesus all that challenges and inspires him, for Jesus was a growing boy. The man and the woman find in him all that they need, for he understands perfectly their place in life. He knows their needs, for he is human; and he can fill those needs, for he is divine.

He suffered as the average man suffers, and then more. He did not have conveniences and luxuries that many in that day enjoyed. He did not even have a home to call his own during the days of his ministry. He said one day that while the birds have nests the Son of man did not even have a place to lay his head. He hungered and grew weary, as other members of the race. And he endured temptation. How sorely he was tempted we cannot know, for his position as incarnate God made possible temptations of an intense degree greater than any ordinary member of the race could experience. Yet in it all he was sinless. He challenged men to convict him of sin. And we may rest assured that if there had been any sin in his life his enemies would have discovered it. They did their best to find something that would so much as cast a suspicion on him. But through all these centuries his life record has remained without a blemish.

As a member of the race he builds upon his relation to man established in creation. That relation is brought to a fitting climax when he engages in the spiritual creation of those who believe in him. Since the race was created through Christ he is supremely qualified to come into the race to save man from sin.

2. *An Israelite.*

It was not enough for him to identify himself with the race in general, he must come into the world as a Hebrew. Thus he fulfills all prophecy that had been given concerning God's plan of redemption. In all the Old Testament we have the record of God's dealings with Israel with the purpose of bringing his people up to the level where they could receive his supreme revelation.

Then, his ultimate purpose was that all the nations of the earth might receive that revelation and come to know him. For that reason he called Abraham to be the head of a chosen race. Thus he called Moses to lead in constituting Israel as a nation with the law of Jehovah as its covenant. So he called and used the prophets to give Israel a true conception of her mission under God in the world. Running through all the Old Testament we have a stream of Messianic prophecy. The anointed of the Lord was promised to bring redemption to God's people. Now, it was not enough for Jesus to come to bring redemption to man, but he must make his whole work of mediation fit into what God had done before. So he must be a Jew, that through him God's purposes in Israel might be accomplished, and that God's promises might be kept.

Having come into the world as an Israelite, and fulfilling all scriptures concerning God's promised redeemer, Jesus then broke the bonds of national prejudice and offered his gospel to all nations and families of men. He is the Son of man, and so is the racial brother of the Chinese, the Japanese, the African, the Indian, and all the other sons and daughters of men. Wherever his gospel is preached he makes that universal appeal. He offers to all men a tie of kinship with God through himself in Christian experience that is stronger than any racial kinship.

III. The Saviour.

This brings us to the heart of our study of Christ. We must have the foregoing survey of his twofold nature, but only that we may the better appreciate his work as Saviour.

1. *One Person.*

It is so easy to confuse the nature and person of Christ that a word of warning may well be given here. He is the Son of God, and so is divine in nature. He is the Son of man, and so is human in nature. Yet he is one person. That has always been a hard matter to explain, and it is no easier today than it was in the second century. There have been those who have solved the problem by compromising his humanity. Others have explained it by denying his deity. Neither position is tenable if we allow the New Testament and Christian experience to speak. That he was thoroughly human the records clearly establish. That he was very God both the Scriptures and Christian experience certify. And those two natures were perfectly blended in one personality. There was never a time when he laid aside his humanity in order to assert his deity, or when he compromised his deity in order to make a display of his humanity. Whenever he spoke, thought, or acted it was as the divine-human Lord.

2. *Perfect life.*

One very essential part of his saving work is the perfect life that he lived. Without this, all else that he did would have failed. There are two or three aspects of his life that should be mentioned here. The first is sinlessness. That has already been discussed briefly. It bears repeating, however, that he had to live a sinless life in order to be able to save sinners. The temptations were genuine and fierce. Yet he went to the cross without a spot on his character.

A second aspect of his life is seen in his perfect obedience to law and to God. He observed the Mosaic law,

the moral law, without even a shadow of suspicion being turned upon him. He lifted it from the confusion of traditionalism and ceremonialism into which it had fallen and gave it a spiritual application in his teaching and life. He scathingly rebuked the Pharisees because they scrupulously observed all the minor matters that had been handed down to them by tradition, while at the same time they overlooked the more important matters of judgment and the love of God.[5] They had lost sight of the spirit of the law while holding to the form. Jesus showed them that the law, when properly understood, points to something better—to spiritual worship and service of God. It is in that light that we cherish the Old Testament today. It is the record of the partial revelation of God that points to the full revelation in Christ.

Jesus also lived in perfect obedience to the Father. It was an obedience that had its beginning in the unity of the Father and the Son before the incarnation. In John 10: 36, Jesus speaks of himself as the one whom the "Father sanctified and sent into the world." Yet he voluntarily came to save man. So that the commission to go and his voluntary offer of himself to go were practically one motive, one desire. That is the epitome of filial obedience. And it was on that plane that Jesus lived while in the world. That took into its scope all that the law of God involved.

Another aspect of his life is seen in his obedience to the law of sin and death. As sinless man, and as perfect Son of God, he yielded to the full operation of the law of sin in order that he might break its grip upon man.

[5]See Luke 11: 37-44.

He suffered untold agony and pain that come with the sin of the world. As he took that sin upon himself he also took the full consequences of it—death.

3. *Death.*

The saving work of Christ is accomplished chiefly in his death. What he is as Son of God and Son of man, and the perfect life that he lived, enabled him to offer himself in death as an atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world. In his death he filled a twofold need.

(1) The first is seen from man's side, in the need to have the power of sin and death broken. That could only be accomplished by someone who could endure sin without sinning, and die without remaining in death. In other words, the power of sin must be exhausted by one whose power is greater. Only the divine-human Saviour could do that. And he did that. All temptations, and all the forces of evil were defeated. When he stood in the courts before his enemies they were completely nonplussed by his perfect life and character. They were at sea to know how to accuse him. And they failed. When he was on the cross and in death he showed to the world what sin at its worst can do. Beyond killing him there was nothing sin could do. He yielded to that in order that he might rise from death the victor over sin.

All this he did for man, in the place of man. His death was a substitutionary atonement for man. He did not have to die for his own sin, for he had none, but he died for the sin of the race, with which he identified himself. That is in fulfilment of the Old Testament teaching concerning the atonement. In the ritual atonement an animal sacrifice was offered, whose blood was shed instead of the blood of the sinner. A relic of this is

preserved in a custom observed by some sects of Jews. "A man takes a cock, a woman a hen (of a white color, on account of Isaiah 1: 18), and before killing, strikes three times on its forehead, saying the words: "May this cock (or hen) be an exchange for me, may it be in my stead! May it be a propitiation for me! Let this cock go to death, but may I go to a good life with all Israel! Amen."[6]

The substitutionary element in the atoning sacrifice was very clearly developed in the Old Testament when the offering for sin was brought up to the plane of human sacrifice. The clearest expression of this is in the prophecy of Isaiah, the fifty-third chapter: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . . But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him."

In the New Testament the fact that Christ's death was a substitutionary offering for sin is a very positive doctrine. Jesus declared it on several occasions. He said that he came to give his life a ransom for many.[7] In speaking of his death as he was eating the paschal meal he said that his blood was shed for many for the remission of sins.[8] The language used in these passages shows that it was actual substitution that Jesus meant. The Greek prepositions used make that clear.

This means that we do not have to die the death of sin. We have to endure the natural consequences of sin in this life, but the sin-death that marks the full operation of sin has been destroyed for us. We who believe

[6]Quoted by Oehler in his Old Testament Theology (Day's translation), page 317 from Buxtorf's Synagoa judaica, ed. 3, cap. XXV, p. 509, sqq.
[7]Matthew 20: 28 and Mark 10: 45.
[8]Matthew 26: 28.

in Christ must pass through death (unless the second coming of Christ prevents it), but it will be a transition from this life to the presence of God.

The death of Christ is not only substitutionary, it is also vicarious. By that we mean that we benefit here and now by his sufferings. "By his stripes we are healed." Through his shed blood we gain forgiveness of sins. The call comes frequently from the hospital for someone who will give some blood for a sick person whose strength is failing. A man steps forward to make the gift. His blood must be tested to see if it is pure and to make sure that it will blend properly with the patient's blood. Then the operation is performed. The surgeon stands between the two and transfuses blood from the strong to the weak. The man who gives his blood soon walks out on his own strength. The weak one soon gains strength and eventually walks out of the building on the strength that has come to him through the blood that was given to him. That is a physical transaction. The vicarious suffering and death of Christ in saving us is a spiritual transaction of a similar sort. The Holy Spirit makes the transfusion, and we gain strength over sin and death through the life of Christ that is mediated to us.

(2) The second need that is met in the death of Christ is seen from the divine side. God needed an adequate expression of his love to man and a medium through which his grace might be given to man. God was not a tyrant whose wrath had to be appeased before man could be saved. But he was the Holy Father whose love for man called for the supreme effort to save man. He does not love us because Christ died, but Christ died

because he loved mankind. This is what is meant when the death of Christ is spoken of as a propitiation. It revealed God's love to man in spite of sin. It removed sin as an obstacle between man and God, and so it met the need in God's holy nature. It broke the power of Satan over man, and established in its stead the reign of God's love.

4. *The resurrection of Christ.*

In his resurrection Christ sealed with divine power and authority all that he did in his life and death. He came forth from the grave shattering the bonds of death. Sin had failed in him, and he had gained the complete victory.

We can only take a brief look at the doctrinal problem in his resurrection. There are two points that interest us primarily. The first is the nature of it. Was it spiritual or physical? It was both There can be no doubt about its being spiritual, if we are willing to grant that people experienced his presence after his death. But it was also physical. His body arose. He ate food with the disciples, he walked and talked with them, and he invited them to touch the wounds in his hands and side. He arose in the same physical body in which he died. There was some change, for he could pass through the closed doors. In other words his resurrection body was independent of space. There are many things about it that we cannot understand now. All will be made clear in the final resurrection.

The other point that interests us is the proof of Jesus' resurrection. Did he actually arise from the tomb, or was it all a myth? There are several proofs that have weight. One is the empty tomb. His body was never

found. It surely would have been found had he not arisen. Another evidence is the testimony of those who saw him. He appeared to the disciples and others, above five hundred in all. The apostles preached the resurrection of Jesus wherever they went. It was the basis of all their preaching in the early days. Read the book of Acts to see how true this is. Again, the whole New Testament is proof that Christ arose. It calls believers to be loyal to the living Christ. Finally, Christian experience is a strong proof. A dead Saviour cannot save. Our experience is the work of a living, personal, reigning Christ. He lives.

5. *Present mediator, high priest.*

Christ intercedes for believers at the right hand of the Father, and so carries on his mediating work. In that he died in atoning for our sin he ministered as high priest on our behalf. In his intercession for us he continues as high priest an effectual work in saving men. "For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need."[9]

[9]Hebrews 4: 15, 16.

Chapter V

THE HOLY SPIRIT

God dwells apart from the world, creating, ruling, and sustaining it—yet he dwells in it. For a special purpose and in an appointed period of time he came into the life of the human race in the person of Christ, the eternal Son. That purpose being accomplished, God the Son withdrew to his heavenly throne to achieve the consummation of his work. That called for God's presence in the world to guide and build up the work that Jesus began during his earthly ministry. To that end the Holy Spirit came and abides among men. What do we believe about the Holy Spirit?

I. The Personality of the Spirit.

Before we can properly study the work of the Spirit, we must seek to understand the Spirit himself. It is of primary importance to every Christian that he know whether the Holy Spirit is a divine person, to be worshiped, served and loved, or whether he is simply an influence or power emanating from God. The common error is to refer to him as "it." All who so speak of the Spirit imply that they do not believe he is a person. If he is a divine person and we do not know him as such, we are robbing him of the worship that is due him, and at the same time we are robbing ourselves of many of the rich treasures in the Christian life. All too often our concern is that we may get more of the Holy Spirit, that

we may be filled with his presence, somewhat as the balloon is filled with gas. Whereas, if we understand the personality of the Spirit, our concern will be that he may have more of us, as the teacher must have the undivided attention and the surrendered life of the pupil. He is to dwell in us, but it is a personal indwelling.

1. *The Bible presents the Holy Spirit as a person.*

The language that is used to designate him always points to a person. Some draw the contrary conclusion on the basis of the Greek word used in the New Testament as a name for the Spirit. That word in the Greek is always in the neuter gender, and so some say that it points out an impersonal object. But that is to misunderstand the original language in its use of genders. Words in the neuter were frequently employed as names of objects that were either masculine, feminine, or neuter. In other words, the Greek made a distinction between grammatical and essential gender. To prove that the Spirit was thought of as a person we need only look into the use of the demonstrative pronoun in this connection. The Greek had the demonstrative in all three genders, and so the point of grammatical gender did not enter into its use. Whenever it is used to refer to the Spirit it is in the masculine, showing that essentially the conception is of a person. To those who do not study the Greek New Testament this paragraph may be somewhat meaningless. But we may use it simply as a guard. When someone who professes to know the language uses the gender of the Greek word for "spirit" to prove that the Holy Spirit is not a person, just remember that those who have made a scientific study of Greek agree to the

conclusion drawn here. The language used points to and describes a person.

The scientific and practical way to study the Scriptures is to weigh the meanings and forms of words and then examine the whole context. It is the wrong method to take a word or a verse out of its Scripture setting and thus determine a doctrine. It is well enough to quote verses, but only in the light of the context.

The characteristics of the Spirit set forth in the Bible are those of personality. They are, in the main, knowledge, feeling and will. "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."[1] Here knowledge is ascribed to the Spirit of God. It is much in the same vein that Paul writes of the mind of the Spirit.[2]

In the fifteenth chapter of Romans Paul exhorts his brethren "for the love of the Spirit" to strive with him in prayer. Just as truly as God the Father loves us does God the Spirit love us. How grateful we should be to God for the presence of the Holy Spirit to love us to himself.

The Spirit also exercises will as a person. He measures out spiritual gifts to us, "dividing to each one severally as he wills" (purposes or desires).

Further, he responds to human treatment as a person. He is grieved when our treatment of him is not righteous.[3] As the mother is grieved when the child does wrong, as the teacher is grieved when the pupil does not learn the

[1] 1 Corinthians 2: 10, 11.
[2] Romans 8: 27.
[3] See Ephesians 4: 30.

lesson, so the Spirit suffers deep disappointment and sorrow when we do not measure up to the standard set for us.

Peter rebuked Ananias for lying to the Holy Spirit.[4] One does not lie to a thing, but to a person.

When one exhibits these characteristics in conduct we say that one is a person. Thus the Scriptures picture the Spirit as a person, and not merely a pervasive influence.

But what of the evidence of Christian experience concerning the Holy Spirit? Our dealings with him have been on the plane of personal relations. A few years ago the writer was preaching in special evangelistic services in a Baptist church in North Florida. At one of the morning services a young man made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ and applied for membership in the church. Before the service he had said to the preacher that he wanted to be a good Christian and a loyal church member, but that he couldn't serve Christ in the church until a certain bad situation was cleared up. He went on to describe the trouble. He showed how it came about and how it was affecting the life of the church. Then he said, "Now, preacher, I want you to get this whole matter straightened out. I am coming into the church trusting you to rid us of this trouble." The preacher replied that it could only be done by the Spirit of God. He might work through man, but he must do the work, for hearts must be changed and love must take the place of hatred. The man agreed to that, and at the close of the service the people of God were called on to pray that God's Spirit might do his work in the hearts of the people in the community. About mid-afternoon the

[4]See Acts 5.

preacher drove along the country road wondering what he should say when he arrived at the home where the trouble centered. He stopped the car and bowed over the steering wheel for a minute, praying that the Spirit of God might guide. Then he drove on, and in a few minutes was standing at the door of the home. When he stated his errand to the family it was evident at once that the work had already been accomplished. There was no need for argument, or persuasion. The hearts had already changed, and bitterness had already left. There was no longer any trouble. Now, there had been no human agent there ahead of the preacher, and yet he knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that some person had been dealing with that family. The Spirit had been there. To this day there is a vivid memory of that experience with the Spirit in doing the work that only a divine person could accomplish. Since that day the writer has never thought of the Spirit in any other terms than as a person.

Have you ever had the conviction that he was using you in some definite service? It may be that you did not fully realize that God's Spirit was guiding you. One afternoon a preacher sat by the bedside of a man who had lived a wicked life. He had fallen deep into sin, but he seemed not to grasp the significance of his sin against God. The minister made several appeals to him and all of them appeared to fail. Then desperately he abandoned his usual methods and message and began talking very plainly to his lost friend. He read Scripture verses and made the direct application to his life. Then he pleaded with him to surrender to Christ before it was too late. Finally his efforts were rewarded. At

home he told his wife that as he was talking to the man he could hardly realize that it was his own voice, for he had not planned so to talk. The understanding wife said, "Perhaps it was not so much you speaking after all, but the Spirit speaking through you." A few months later, at that man's funeral, the preacher was glad that God's Spirit had spoken through him. You cannot debate with him about the personality of the Spirit. He knows he is a person, for he has had personal dealings with him.

II. The Deity of the Holy Spirit.

Do we believe that the Holy Spirit is God? The deity of the Spirit is not so often questioned as it is neglected. We treat him as though he were something for us to use or neglect, according to our convenience or need. What we need is not so much enlightenment on the subject, as emphasis. It should be seared into our consciousness that the presence with us of the Holy Spirit means that the omnipotent, eternal, omniscient, omnipresent God is at hand to guide us.

The question is rarely raised, but the fact remains that the average Christian treats him as though he were not God. If Christ were to walk into your room, what would you do? Would you ignore him? If he should ask you to help him perform a miracle would you consent? If he should want to spend the day with you, would you be too busy to tarry with him? Would you shove him aside with some statement about having your own plans and that maybe you could see him later? Isn't that about the way we treat the Holy Spirit? And he is just as truly God as is Christ, and he is just as really present with us as was Christ with the disciples.

A famous physician from Europe was in Chicago for a brief visit a few years ago. A wealthy woman wrote to him and asked him to come to her home and heal her child. He was pressed with so many duties and calls that it seemed that he would not be able to grant her request, but the mother trusted and hoped. It was his custom to take a stroll after lunch every day, but he directed his chauffeur to come for him at once in case of a sudden storm. One afternoon while he was walking a severe storm suddenly broke upon the city and the doctor stepped upon the porch of a palatial home and touched the door-bell. It so happened that it was this mother's home and she opened the door. Failing to recognize him she waved him to a chair on the porch and closed the door. Soon the chauffeur came and hurried him back to the hotel. When the woman read in the papers the next day that the famous physician had been caught in a storm and had come to her home for shelter she was distracted with grief. If only she had recognized him![5] That is the tragedy of many people in their need of God. They fail to recognize the Holy Spirit as God.

The Scriptures always speak of him as God. He was present in creation, and participated in it. Job exulted that the Spirit of God had created him and given him life (33: 4). The Genesis account also speaks of the presence of the Spirit in creation.[6]

In giving the commission to the disciples Jesus incorporated the Spirit with himself in the Trinity—"in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." In these and many other instances, is he represented to us as God.

[5]Related by J. Archer Gray in "Wings of the Spirit."
[6]Genesis 1: 2.

Once more our experience agrees with Scripture testimony. We have known that he imparts the gift of eternal life to us, even as Jesus said in John 6: 63. That which he does in us—forgiveness and regeneration and all of Christian experience—he accomplishes as God working in us. If we had no statement from Scripture about the deity of the Holy Spirit we would still say that the one with whom we deal in Christian experience is very God.

III. The Work of the Holy Spirit.

The personality and deity of the Spirit are to be seen most clearly in the study of his work. What he does exhibits what he is. There are three distinct phases of the Spirit's work.

1. *The first is in connection with revelation.*

This has been suggested already in the study of the Scriptures as the source and authority in matters of Christian doctrine. But it is so distinctly the work of the Spirit that it must be mentioned here. It is the work of making God and his will known to men. There are two or three steps involved in it. The first is the gift of revelation, the act of revealing. This the Holy Spirit did through men especially chosen for the task. "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spoke from God being moved by the Holy Spirit."[7] The prophets announced their messages with the statement, "thus saith the Lord." And when the people heard they knew by the ring of authority and the flame of power that it was God's message to them.

[7] 2 Peter 1: 21.

It was in his presence and power that Jesus spoke and taught. The Spirit came upon him at his baptism to manifest the full approval of God upon his saving ministry, led him into the wilderness to be tempted, then led him again into Galilee and on through his ministry, giving him wisdom to teach and power to perform miracles. Thus we have a perfect example in him of the Spirit-led life.

He promised the disciples that the same Spirit would come upon them to impart to them divine knowledge and wisdom. We know from the study of the Book of Acts that he came upon them in fulfilment of that promise, and they spoke God's word in power.

The second step in revelation is the recording of God's message. The Spirit saw to it that a record was made and preserved. This is our doctrine of inspiration. He chose the men for the task, gave them the message, and then guided them in writing it. The unity of the Bible, the applicableness of the Scriptures to all ages, as well as to the particular age in which they were given, and the double revelational element in them, revealing God to man and man to himself, all indicate that it is the inspired Word of God.

The third phase of revelation as the work of the Spirit is in the interpretation of the Scriptures. The giving of God's message is usually called revelation, the recording of it is spoken of as inspiration, and the work of the Spirit in guiding the interpretation is illumination. The same Spirit is the agent in all of this threefold task of revelation. Surely we need to realize this truth afresh and yield our minds to him as we approach the study of the Word that he inspired.

2. *Again, the Spirit works with the unregenerate.*

He has the compassion of the Saviour, seeking the lost. He loves men for their immortal worth before God. He looks beneath the debris of sin and sees the image of God that is waiting to be restored. As the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost, so the Spirit of God goes about seeking the lost, that the saving work of Christ might be carried on. We think of Jesus' weeping over Jerusalem because she would not repent and receive him. That is the picture of the Spirit, too. It grieves him beyond expression when unconverted people turn away from him.

The saving work of Christ now is in the presence and power of the Spirit. He witnesses to Christ. It isn't enough to read or preach the gospel. Before the harvest of soul-winning can come the Spirit must open the mind and heart of the unconverted to see Christ in the gospel. He is the light that shines in our hearts to reveal Christ to us. In 1814, during the attack of the British on Baltimore, Francis Scott Key went on an errand, under a flag of truce, to the British fleet. He was detained while the bombardment of Fort McHenry, the defense of Baltimore, was taking place. All through the night he peered through the darkness to catch a glimpse of the American flag. Finally, the gray streaks of dawn came, and then the full light of the new day. In the light Key saw the stars and stripes waving in triumph over the fort and in the inspiration of that experience he wrote our anthem, "The Star Spangled Banner." In like manner does the Holy Spirit reveal Christ to those who look for him. He is the light that points to Christ.

He must also cause the sinner to see his sinful nature.

The Spirit applies the plan of salvation to the individual. We see no need of salvation until we realize that we are under the condemnation of sin and that we need a divine deliverance from that sin and condemnation. To help us to realize that the Spirit came. "And when he is come, he will convict the world of sin." That is his primary work in the world today. He is to show the sinner his need of the Saviour. A pupil ponders over a problem in mathematics, while the teacher stands by offering guidance. As he looks intently at the statement of the problem that has been put in the book, the teacher points out the solution that is needed and then guides his thinking to see where the solution may be found. He listens to the teacher while he looks at the problem. Suddenly he says, "I see," and the problem is solved for him. Now, the strange thing is that the figures were not changed, and nothing was added to, or taken from, the problem. But he saw it all in a new light. It is the guidance of a good teacher. So the Spirit deals with the lost man. He guides him to see the problem in his sinfulness and his need of a Saviour. And then he reveals the Saviour who is needed.

The Spirit goes a step further and makes the saving work of Christ effectual in the life of the lost one who calls upon him for salvation. What Christ has wrought in his redemptive life and death and resurrection becomes real to us through the Spirit. The atonement of Christ is sufficient for all, but it becomes efficient for the individual only as he yields to the Spirit. The only redemption that saves is the life-union between the sinner and the Saviour. Christ must come into our lives and dwell within us. He is to be incarnated in every one of

his followers. Only then will we have his power, and grace, and love. That can come to pass only through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

3. *The Spirit works with the regenerate.*

What do we believe concerning the work of the Spirit in the life of the Christian? Having led us into an experience of the saving grace of Christ, the Spirit does not forsake us. He has a great work to do beyond that with every Christian. We should be concerned to know what that work is, that it might be fully accomplished in us.

First of all, it is the work of quickening our consciousness of sin. Some Christians seem to think that they are through with sin when they are converted. Perhaps that explains their miserable failure to gain a full victory over sin. Once we are convicted of our sin and turn from it, we enter the battle in earnest. We must now be more alert than ever to ward off the attacks of the enemy. A clear eye to discern the attacks is essential to victory. That is where the Spirit helps. He cultivates and intensifies in us the consciousness of sin to the end that we may overcome it.

Two men are standing on the deck of a vessel. The older is pointing out to the younger an object a great distance away on the sea. The older one sees it, for his eye is trained to see objects on the water at a great distance. The younger man has an untrained eye. But he puts himself under the training of the experienced seaman. After a time his length of vision increases. He becomes keen of eye. Now he sweeps the horizon with his vision as he walks the deck, readily recognizing the appearance of danger while it is yet a long way off.

So the Christian should be trained by the Spirit to recognize temptation and sin. If we put ourselves in training under him he will cultivate in us the ability to sense and see the dangerous approach of sin before it comes near.

Not only does he help us to see the evil and danger of sin, but he also gives us the strength to overcome it. "For the law of the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." Until we accepted Christ the law of sin reigned unto death within us. But when we yielded to him the Spirit came in to set us free from that law and to set in operation a new and greater law. And it is not simply a perfect law of holiness by which we may measure our conduct. It is a life force, a living law, the presence and power of the personal Spirit of God.

The consciousness of sin that we have after conversion is not the same that we had before. Then it was almost despair as we thought of the consequences of sin if it should be allowed to take its course. Now there is an assurance of victory; it is not allowed to take its course, for Christ has broken the reign of sin. Now his Spirit dwells within us to give us the power to appropriate that victory. If someone says that he will sin freely because he has the assurance of victory, he does not understand the nature of the work of the Spirit in the life of the Christian. He gives us the assurance of victory and at the same time he gives us an increasing abhorrence of sin. It is not that we sit back and wait for him to accomplish the victory for us, but that he leads us to understand the real nature of sin, thereby making us desire to overcome

it, and he supplements our strength with his power to make the victory possible. In all of our needs he is our comforter.

He is also the teacher of the Christian. He can't teach the unregenerate. But having come to the point where we have surrendered to him and have begun with him the battle against sin, we need next to be taught the way of life. With knowledge comes power. We need to know more of Christ, more of God, more of our relation and responsibility to him, more of his plan for using us in saving the world. All this knowledge centers in Christ and is mediated to us through the Holy Spirit. His work is to lead men to honor and know Christ. "He shall testify of me," said Jesus.

Prayer takes on a vital meaning in our fellowship with the Spirit. We are to ask the Father to give him to us (Luke 11: 13) to take the place of a personal teacher in our lives. He does more than we dream of or ask for. He intercedes for us and in us. When we do not know what to pray for he makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered (Rom. 8: 26). Christ intercedes for us at the throne of God while the Spirit labors with us in prayer, leading us to pray and helping us in our weakness. The Spirit-led life is one of constant prayer.

He also teaches us the way of service, duty, and joy. The Christian can and should do the will of God in every decision of his life. God has a general plan for the Christian life and he has a specific plan for every individual. We should know what it is, and we may know it. Some Christians are guided by signs and unusual occurrences, but the normal way for the Spirit to

guide us is through Bible study, prayer and meditation. That should be our procedure in facing every problem and crisis. It should also be a part of our daily program. It is the best way to put ourselves in accord with God's will. In this way we give our best attention to the Spirit, to let him speak to us through the inspired Word, and to let him speak directly to our souls. In this way we give the best of our thought to the matter in which we seek guidance, and it is only when we give him our best thinking that the Spirit can lead us freely.

So the Christian should cultivate the presence of the Spirit, somewhat as we cultivate human friendship. A stranger moves into your community and you become acquainted with him. You are attracted to him, and so you desire to cultivate his friendship. You call on him and sit with him, talking of the things of common interest between you. You leave feeling that you know him better. Then he calls on you and you welcome him to your home. The days pass and one day you realize that this one who was a stranger has become your best friend. There has grown up between you a fellowship that intertwines your lives. So we should cultivate the fellowship of the Spirit.

We may increasingly know and love the Spirit by the formula suggested above—Bible study, prayer and meditation. The next step is to do what we know he wants us to do. Let us not question the fact of divine leadership in our lives until we have done the things that are very clearly set forth for us. It may be that the reason we have not experienced the definite and individual guidance of the Spirit is that there is some unconfessed sin in our lives, or that we have failed to do what he

has said in his Word that every Christian should do. All of this means that we are to cultivate the fellowship of the Spirit by living the life that he can control.

"The best well in one of our inland cities was choked and dry for many months because an old rag carpet had been thrust into the opening from which the water flowed. When the rug was pulled out, the water flowed again pure and cool and invigorating. There are many in the church today who once knew the matchless joy of the Holy Spirit, but some sin or worldly conformity, some act of disobedience, more or less conscious disobedience, to God has come in and the fountain is choked. Let us pull out the old rags today that this wondrous fountain may burst forth again, springing up every day and hour into everlasting life" (Dr. Torrey, *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit,* page 115).

Someone says that this matter of being led by the Holy Spirit in all things is mysterious. Yes, it is mysterious, as is any contact of a human life with God. Yet, it is also Christian common sense. The radio is a mystery, yet we tune in on a concert and enjoy it. We know something about the radio, but there is much that we do not know. So it is with following God's Spirit. While we cannot explain his nature and work we can benefit by his power and wisdom through fellowship with him. Follow the light that you have and more light will be given. Use the teachings of the Scriptures, seeking the guidance of the Spirit, and they will be supplemented as your needs demand. The reason we think of the fellowship with the Spirit as too mysterious to be practical is that we have neglected him, when we should have cultivated him. There is no greater need among Christians

today. We must yield to the Spirit, heed his counsel, obey his voice, love him and seek to understand his way with us, if we are in any sense to measure up to the standard set in the name Christian that we bear.

Having entered this experience of grace through the Spirit, we must remember that his work is not accomplished in us until he is able to use us in reaching others. As the radiant light of the electric bulb gives evidence of the presence within of electricity, so the Christian is to exhibt the presence of the Spirit within. And now the light that pointed the way to Christ shines through us to point the way for others who are yet wandering in the darkness of sin.

Dr. Torrey[8] tells of an experience in which a trained personal worker struggled with a lost man for two hours without bringing him to a decision. Finally she led the man to Dr. Torrey, who used the same Scripture passages and the same appeal that the worker had used and in a few minutes the man was under conviction and surrendered to Christ. When she expressed amazement at what had happened Dr. Torrey told her that when he saw that she had failed he cast himself in utter helplessness upon the Holy Spirit to do the work, and he did it. She had forgotten that conviction is the work of the Spirit, and so she had failed to give him a chance with the lost man. Many times Christian workers fail right there.

[8]Torrey, "The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit," p. 83f.

Chapter VI

REPENTANCE, FAITH AND CONFESSION

Following upon a study of Christ and the Holy Spirit in making provision for our salvation, we come now to consider man's appropriation of God's saving work. The initiative in the experience of redemption is with God, but man must respond. The experience must be mutual. We seek in this chapter to define our first step in entering upon his experience. It is a twofold step, repentance and faith. It is impossible to say which comes first, perhaps neither. They seem to come at the same time, one being inextricably involved in the other. For the sake of convenience let us consider them separately.

I. Repentance.

Some words are used so commonly that we do not pause to consider their true meaning. We assume that we know their meaning when actually we do not. Repentance is one of those words. What does it mean? What are the essentials of this act that we call repentance? Is it an act, after all, or is it a process? What produces it? How often do we need to repent? These and many other questions arise in our minds when we approach this subject. Perhaps the discussion that follows will answer some of them.

Man is a personal being. He thinks, is emotional, chooses. These are the essential characteristics of a self-conscious being—a person. It is on this basis that the

gospel makes its appeal to man. It elicits a personal response from man. That must be repentance. There are five facts about repentance that we should emphasize.

1. *It is a change of mind regarding sin.*

That is, it is reflective thought upon sin committed. We must recognize the nature of sin and that we are sinners. The scribes and Pharisees failed in this and so fell under the withering denouncement of Jesus, "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."[1] Jesus sought to turn the searching gaze of men inward, knowing that it was the only way to bring them to repentance, to lead them to approach the godly life.

The only way to appreciate the meaning of our sin is to see it in the light of our relation to God. That is the first step in repentance. Jesus told a brief story in the twenty-first chapter of Matthew that illustrates this. There was a father who had two sons. He told them to go and work in his vineyard. One said he would go, but the other refused. The one that promised to work never did it. But the one that refused to go reflected upon what he had done, changed his mind and went and did the work. The only basis upon which he would repent of his action was the relationship that obtained between them. He was his father's son, and his refusal to obey was not becoming in a true son. In the light of that relationship the deed appeared wrong and he repented and went and did that which his father had requested him to do. The other son thought lightly of his promise

[1]Matthew 23: 27.

to his father and disobeyed. He was the unrepentant sinner. He did not appreciate the duty and love he owed his father. So Jesus said the repentant sinners would go into the kingdom of God ahead of the priests and elders who knew no repentance.

We must come to look upon sin as God sees it. We must get his estimate of it. As was said above, we must understand sin in the relationship of child to father. But there is a step beyond that in which we come to understand how our sin affects God and what he thinks of it. When the parent rebukes the child for sin committed he wants him first to see that he has done wrong as a child, and then he wants him to see his sin from the standpoint of the parent. That is the reason we are careful to explain to our children why we discipline them. One of the clearest memories of my childhood days is that of heart-breaking sorrow when mother would rebuke me for doing wrong and say, "Son, you have betrayed mother's confidence in you." That hurt more than ten penalties that she might have put upon me. Because of my love for her I wanted her to feel that she could trust me. To fail in that brought unspeakable sorrow. But now I have a more mature understanding of those sins. I can see the evil seed in them that, if left to grow, would bring forth an abundant harvest of iniquity and death. They would have broken that happy relationship between mother and son in the home. I can understand now why she was grieved by them. I have come to understand mother's character, that those sins were a reflection upon her and that she was deeply hurt by them. My first conception of sin was in the light of her will, her command to me. My later conception was in the light of

her character. So it is with repentance. We are to come to see the ugliness of sin in the light of the holy character of God.

2. *It is sorrow for sin.*

Repentance is a change of attitude of mind toward sin and a deep sense of sorrow over sin. This element of sorrow in repentance has already been suggested. One cannot have a genuine experience of repentance without having the change of mind and change of heart intermingled. But it should be said that the more thoroughly we understand our sin the deeper is our sorrow. That is the way repentance works.

This sorrow for sin must be directed toward God. There is a sense of regret that comes to us when our sin is discovered and we are punished. So a criminal might be caught in his crime and sentenced to serve a term in prison. He is sorry that he got caught, but he may not be sorry that he did wrong. In fact, he may be planning other crimes all the while he is in prison. But repentance is godly sorrow. It comes to us when we discover the evil that we have done, that it is wrong in the sight of God. The sin may not be known to anyone save the sinner, but that is enough to cause him to repent.

Paul has something to say about this in 2 Corinthians 7: 10, "For the godly sorrow works repentance unto salvation without regret. But the sorrow of the world works death." So repentance is godly sorrow that comes when we recognize our sin in the light of revelation. We come to know that we are sinners condemned before God, and so we turn away from sin to Christ. A striking illustration here is the contrast between Judas and Peter. After he received his pay for betraying Jesus, and while

Jesus was suffering at the hands of the mob, Judas thought of what he had done. Perhaps he stood off at a distance and watched Jesus in his agony on the cross. The money in his hands represented the suffering of an innocent man. A dense cloud of remorse came over him, which he sought to throw off by returning the money, and when that failed to relieve him he committed suicide. That is the old story, though an extremely graphic picture, of what remorse without true repentance will do.

Peter denied Christ, and when the cock crew he remembered what Jesus had said and he went out and wept bitterly. Then he sought the company of those who were closest to Jesus, and at the first opportunity he went directly to Jesus and humbled himself before him and worshiped him. One morning Jesus and this vacillating disciple met by the sea and all was smoothed out. Once more he was Peter, the leader of the twelve, and now he was being prepared for a great service.

What was the difference between these two disciples? The answer is in our definition of repentance. One was filled with remorse with nothing but the world to console him. The other repented toward Christ, brought his burden of sorrow to him, and found him the great sin-bearer and lover of souls.

3. *It is turning away from sin.*

It is not enough to change our mental attitude toward sin and become sorrowful over it, but we must turn away from sin to Christ the Saviour. True repentance never stops short of repudiation of sin. This is the acid test of repentance. It may be that some of us hurry through the first and second aspects of repentance and so we are not as active, positive and determined in this third phase

of it as we should be. If we are hurried and superficial in our understanding of sin our sorrow will not be deep and our repudiation of sin will not be genuine and far-reaching. If we can lead people to be deliberate and thorough in their effort to understand the meaning of sin, and if we can lead them to experience genuine sorrow for their sin, it will be easier to lead them to repudiate it. Repentance, then, is the change of disposition toward God with reference to sin in which we renounce sin. We determine to live in pure and perfect loyalty to Christ.

Whether repentance is sudden or gradual depends largely upon the person and conditions. Some people make decisions quickly. Others are slow in deciding questions and must come to a change gradually. In all probability with a child in a Christian home repentance will come gradually. Whereas, for an adult who has lived in sin it would likely be rather sudden. There are many varieties of Christian experience, and one does not have to conform to the exact type that another has. But there must be a definite repudiation of sin following a change of mind and heart toward sin.

4. *Repentance is followed by peace and joy.*

We have thought of it in connection with shedding tears and deep agony of soul—so much so that when people make the public profession of Christ amidst sobbing and weeping we conclude that it is genuine repentance, and when someone comes with a smile of assurance we are not so sure whether the repentance is real. Rather should we see that if one comes to profess Christ after having repented and trusted in him, it is quite natural that there should be rejoicing. If one comes in the midst of making that transition from the love of sin to

the love of Christ, it is likely that there will be some evidence of an emotional upheaval. However, that is determined largely by the personality of the individual. The point to be made here is that the result should be a deep sense of peace and joy. It is the peace that Christ speaks to the sin-troubled soul when we repent. It is the joy of victory over sin. Recall the experience of Christian, in *Pilgrim's Progress.* When he came to the cross his burden was loosed and rolled away from him. "Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, 'he hath given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death.' "

5. *Repentance is the permanent attitude of the Christian.*

How often should we repent? It should be sustained in the Christian. It is not an initial act which is to be forgotten after we yield to Christ. It is an attitude toward sin, a repudiation of it, a hatred of sin, that stays with us and grows. The message in the book of Revelation, "be zealous therefore, and repent," is directed to church members, professing Christians. We should look for sin in our own lives, and we should grow in our ability to detect it. Then it should be confessed without delay.

It is somewhat like a man becoming a naturalized American citizen. He must give up all claims of citizenship in his former country and then swear allegiance to America. Now he is an American citizen. But there may come appeals to him daily to be untrue and disloyal to the government of his new country. There may be war between his old country and America. But his duty is here and he must be true, for he has sworn it. So it is with the Christian. Temptations come daily, but he

must be true to Christ. And every time he sins, though it may appear to be ever so small a sin, he must repent and ask for forgiveness.

It should always be kept in mind that repentance is brought about through the Holy Spirit. Christ came to give repentance to Israel,[2] and the Holy Spirit carries that work on among all peoples.[3] In the preaching of the gospel God's Spirit is present to add repentance.[4]

II. Faith.

There is an indissoluble connection between faith and repentance. One is the counterpart of the other. There is no priority of one over the other. They go together, and are essential to each other. Neither means anything by itself. It is only for the purpose of convenience that we study them separately.

1. *What is faith?*

A definition of faith is almost out of the question. But there are three statements that may be made about it.

(1) The first is that it is knowledge. There must be some intellectual grasp or understanding of the gospel. "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?"[5] That is axiomatic. We cannot believe unless we have some basis of knowledge on which to establish our faith. We must know the gospel before we can accept it. We must know Christ before we can surrender to him.

This does not mean that faith is determined by knowledge, but that knowledge is a preliminary part of faith.

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[2]Acts 5: 31.
[3]See Luke 24: 45ff.
[4]2 Timothy 2: 25.
[5]Romans 10: 14.

Nor does it mean that we must know exhaustively before we can exercise saving faith. The prisoner must know that there is a friend who can secure a pardon for him if he will put his case in his hands. He does not have to know all the details of how the pardon is accomplished.

Faith does not require exhaustive knowledge, but it builds on a knowledge that grows. "This is life eternal," said Jesus, "that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."[6]

It should be pointed out that the word "to know" that John used in recording that saying of Jesus implies personal experience. Saving knowledge of Christ begins in, and builds upon, experience with him.

(2) Thus the element of knowledge grows into the second phase of faith, which is belief. We must know that Christ came to save men from their sins, and then believe that he is able to save. Not all who know that the gospel is God's plan of salvation believe in its efficacy. Not all who know about Jesus believe that he is the one Saviour of the world. But both are necessary to saving faith.

(3) The third statement about faith is that it is trust. It is this that clinches faith for the individual. Knowing that Christ came to save the lost, and believing that he is able to save, we trust him, commit ourselves to him. Paul said, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."[7]

Someone has told the story of an English missionary telling a native in Africa of ice. He explained that ice

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[6]John 17: 3.
[7]2 Timothy 1: 12.

is frozen water and that in England sometimes the rivers freeze over so that people can walk out on them. The African couldn't believe such a thing, though he would not dispute the missionary's word. But there came a time when he was in England and he visited his friend the missionary. It was in winter and so the Englishman took him to see a river that had frozen. He even walked out on the ice to demonstrate that it would bear his weight. The African then said that he believed what he had heard about it. The missionary then invited him to walk out on it. And he did so. He trusted himself to what he believed to be true about the ice.

One can easily imagine the same thing happening concerning one who has never seen or traveled in an airplane. To hear about an airplane is to have knowledge of man's flying ability. To see a friend fly in one is to believe that man can fly. To step aboard a plane with the pilot at the controls is to trust in man's ability to fly. When he is soaring in the air the novice has combined the three elements of faith. Then the more he flies with the pilot the stronger his faith in that pilot becomes.

This is an illustration of faith. It includes knowledge, belief, and trust. It is the action of the intellect, the emotions and the will. It is one act, but it includes all the conscious life. And it becomes an abiding attitude of the soul. It is the human disposition that blends with divine grace to form the basis of fellowship with God. Since that fellowship is to continue in the life to come, faith is to grow and abide forever.

2. *Relation to Salvation.*

So much for faith by way of definition. Now, a further statement should be made concerning the relation of faith to salvation. It is the condition on which we are saved, it is the way we appropriate God's gift of eternal life. It does not save, but it is the condition on which Christ saves us. "By grace are ye saved, through faith" (Eph. 2: 8).

One January day J. H. Ware, who is now a missionary in China, and I spent the day on a Pullman coach in the railroad yards in Chicago. The temperature was below zero and the pipes in the car froze, so that there was no heat. We waited and shivered a long time, hoping that someone would come to our relief. Finally we went out and found a workman and prevailed upon him to have our car switched over to a place where it would be connected with the heating plant. When the connection was made the pipes thawed and the heat came in and warmed the car. Now, there was a difference between the connection that was made and the heat that saved us from freezing. But the connection brought the heat to us. Such a distinction we must make between faith and grace. Faith brings us into vital contact with God, but it is his grace that saves us.

Some see a great difficulty in the relation of faith and works to salvation. There really is no difficulty at all. Our works exhibit our faith as the fruit exhibits the life of the tree. If we think that man might be saved by his good works we do not understand the nature of the saved life. We can no more expect to find Christian works in a life that is devoid of faith in Christ than we can expect to gather good apples from a wild and

uncultivated tree. The fruit testifies to the condition of the tree. So good works testify to the inner condition of the life. Faith is the first condition, and there is no substitute for it.

III. Confession.

The inevitable consequence of repentance of sin and faith in Christ is confession. It is seldom that this is mentioned separately. It is usually assumed to be a part of repentance, and so it is passed over with very little emphasis. It is rather the next step after the initial act of repentance and faith. "For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."[8]

This explains the Baptist procedure of receiving members into the church. The candidate for membership must appear before the church and make a confession of sin, and of faith in Christ. This is the best way of safeguarding our primary principle of a converted church membership.

Confession has respect to both repentance and faith. They are the twofold inner change of attitude toward sin and Christ. Confession is the declaration of that change. Let us consider it first with reference to sin. Repentance is a new understanding of sin in the light of our relation to God, a renunciation of sin, and a determination to sin no more. Confession is coming to Christ and telling him of this change of attitude and asking God through Christ to forgive us. You can no

[8]Romans 10: 10, 11.

more have repentance without confession than you can have the rising sun without daylight. They are inseparable parts of every genuine experience of the saving grace of Christ.

Sin has two directions beyond the life of the sinner. Primarily, it is against God. And since sin is against God it must be confessed directly to him. There is no Scripture basis for the practice of holding a private confessional where individuals may appear before a priest, and confess sins, and be forgiven. As a matter of fact, that is a perversion of the Scripture teaching. It defeats the purpose for which confession is required, and very easily degenerates into a license to sin. We should never cease to teach and preach that every sinner must come directly to God and confess to him and ask him for forgiveness.

The other direction of sin is against man. The confession of this type of sin should be to the one against whom it is committed. And it should be just as readily and quickly made as the confession to God. Just so soon as we realize that we have wronged someone we must go to that person and acknowledge the wrong and seek forgiveness. The Christian does not have to be persuaded to do this, he does it voluntarily. There is a spirit of repentance in the Christian that works toward confession. If there is malice or a personal difficulty between two or more members of a church, we may be sure that there has been a failure to understand the New Testament doctrine of repentance and confession.

Confession also has respect to faith in Christ as the Son of God. It was this that Jesus commended Peter for, as recorded in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew. It

was this, too, that Paul wrote of in Romans 10: 10, 11, quoted above. We cannot exercise faith in Christ without coming to him in prayer to tell him of it. And to believe in him is to have an irresistible impulse in us to tell our friends about it. The Baptist practice of inviting people to come forward in church service and make the confession of Christ is in keeping with the nature of the initial stage in Christian experience. It is permitting the most natural expression of repentance and faith.

So repentance and faith should be confessed first to God directly and then before the church publicly. The only place in the church for confession is in the public service. That should come after we have confessed directly to God in prayer. Thus it becomes a testimonial service, which has great evangelistic force.

Chapter VII

FORGIVENESS, JUSTIFICATION AND ADOPTION

In the last chapter we considered man's approach to God, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. In repentance, faith, and confession man is meeting the conditions on which God can bestow upon him the blessings of salvation. Three phases of God's work in Christian experience we are to consider in this chapter. They are God's acts solely, and are bestowed upon man.

I. Forgiveness.

Many writers in dealing with forgiveness treat it simply as a part of justification, or as another word for the same act. It seems to me, however, that there is a doctrine of forgiveness that should be dealt with separately. Surely there is enough said about it in the New Testament. And there are two Greek words used to describe this act, while a distinctly separate word is always used where justification is mentioned.

1. *Meaning.*

The common word that is used in the Greek New Testament for our English word "forgive" literally means "to send away." It is sometimes translated "remit." And so the reference is to God's disposition of our sins. He sends them away. They were committed against him, but he has removed them from himself. That is, he does not hold them against us.

The other Greek word for "forgive," less frequently used, means "to give freely," "to show one's self gracious," "to grant forgiveness," "to bestow favor." The reference is to God's attitude toward man in the treatment of sin. This meaning fits in with the more commonly used word spoken of above.

The reference in forgiveness is to individual sins, and to the effect that they might have on God. When we come to him by faith we find that he has removed all our transgressions from himself, so that he is not influenced by them in his attitude toward us. Since there is no guaranty that we will live perfect lives in this world there is a need for repeated forgiveness. God must constantly be remitting our sins, else he would be swayed in some measure by them.

If sin were simply a mistake, or an inevitable error in the process of growth, the outcome of which is rather definitely fixed, forgiveness would be a light matter. God could then forgive with a gesture, once and for all, and wait for man to outgrow his sin. But it is on a different plane entirely. Sin is a voluntary breach of personal relations. Therefore forgiveness must be a personal response of God. It involves every human person and his every sin.

2. *Grounded in the death of Christ.*

Forgiveness of sins is based upon the death of Christ. That is the significance of the words of Jesus, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." The death of Jesus had a twofold bearing upon forgiveness. In the first place it revealed God's infinite love, and the length to which that love will go in order to save man. And in the second

place it revealed God's power as greater than the power of sin. God can forgive, no matter how great may be the sin. There is just one exception, the unpardonable sin, which indicates a complete moral perversion on the part of the one committing it, and so God has no access to that life.

A young woman loved and married a young man who was anything but righteous. She began praying that God would save him. He was abusive and rough. He drank and cursed and caroused. But through it all she continued to love him. One day she told him that she thought she was willing to join him in his sin and go to hell just to be with him, if he would not accept Christ and go with her in the Christian life, so much did she love him. Then the victory came. Her love and patience won out. He was converted, and through her sacrifice he was educated for the ministry. In time he became a Methodist bishop in one of our Southern States.

Christ revealed the infinite love of God in his willingness to die for our sins and in his ability to arise from death and break the power of sin.

3. *Realized through confession.*

If we will confess our sins he will forgive us. But what do we mean by confession? It includes repentance and faith, forgiveness of the sins that have been committed against us, and prayer to God for forgiveness. Thus the life is prepared to enter into fellowship with God.

Perhaps we can see this whole transaction by an analogy. The mother sees her child do wrong and is grieved by it. Yet in her heart she forgives him and yearns to have him come and confess his wrong deed in

order that she may tell him that she has forgiven him. She even goes to him and points out his sin to him, asking him to repent. Then the child realizes that he has disobeyed mother. As long as he refrains from coming to her to confess and ask her pardon there is a strained relationship between them. The mother's heart is yearning to bestow forgiveness, but he must ask for it. To forgive him without a confession would be to license him to sin. Finally, he makes a full confession of the whole thing. Then he finds that mother has not stored up wrath against him, but that she had been ready and waiting a long while to bestow her loving forgiveness on him.

4. *Human forgiveness.*

A word might be said here about human forgiveness. It is patterned after the divine act. The same meaning holds, and the same attitude applies. If a person sins against me I must forgive him at once. I am not to hold it in my heart against him for a minute. I remove it from me and when he asks my forgiveness I can say that it has already been granted. But someone says, "I can't forgive until he apologizes." If that is the case you are storing up malice in your heart against him, and surely that is not Christian. Rather, you must set that sin aside, forgive it, and then when he comes to ask your forgiveness the door is already open for the two of you to walk into the room of good fellowship.

Again, someone says, "I may forgive, but I can't forget." Which is just another way of saying that you are not willing to forgive fully. The Christian must forgive and drop the matter there. Or, if there is a difficulty between him and the other person, he must go to him

and seek a reconciliation. Then drop it. We may be surprised sometime how speedily we can forget wrongs committed against us.

We must forgive those who sin against us if we are to ask and expect God to forgive us. This does not mean that God measures his grace to us by the same standard that we observe in our treatment of our fellow man. It means, rather, that we are to be guided by God's standard of forgiveness. And it means that we are not prepared in spirit to receive his forgiveness until we are willing to forgive freely. True confession, repentance, and faith involve a complete renunciation of sin, and that involves forgiveness of those who have sinned against us.

II. Justification.

Now an interesting doctrinal question arises. What is justification? Let the reader stop here and give his own definition before reading on.

1. *Definition.*

Justification is God's judicial act in which he declares the repentant sinner free from condemnation and guilt and restores him to divine favor. It takes place when the sinner trusts in Christ and his merits for salvation. The Greek word used in the New Testament means "to declare righteous." The reference is to the standing of man before the divine bar of justice. In sin man stands condemned, for he has broken the law and defied God; in Christ the Christian stands acquitted of guilt and delivered from condemnation.

This is God's act solely, and does not need repeating. Once and for all time he imputes the righteousness of

Christ to the one who believes in him. That gives the believer a permanent status before God, a new relation which is never broken. This is possible because it is God's work. That leads us to the basis on which it is wrought.

2. *Grounded in the death of Christ.*

God is just and holy. Man is sinful. God cannot justify man if by doing so he compromises his justice. Man cannot become just without divine help. How to bring the two together for man's justification, and at the same time for an exaltation of God's justice, is the problem that Jesus solved in his incarnation and death and resurrection. In his life he kept the perfect law of God —had he sinned he would not be righteous and so would have been impotent to render others righteous, he would thus have become a fellow-criminal with all who have sinned, and not a benefactor and deliverer. In his death he submitted to the full operation of sin—had he not died sin would have a reserve of power beyond God's reach. In his resurrection he broke the power of sin and death—had he not risen he would have become the victim of sin instead of the victor. In all this he established his power over sin and thereafter could use that power in saving others.

Thus the death of Christ has a twofold significance for our justification. In the first place it was a propitiation for our sin. By that we mean that he suffered the worst that sin could do, and he did it in our place, that he might offer the greatest possible revelation of God's love to man. Sin can do no more for us, though we should not accept Christ. God could never accomplish

a greater revelation of his love to man. The death of Christ removes every obstacle in the way of justifying man, except the individual will.

In the second place, the death of Christ preserves the justice of God in justifying sinners. If God's justice is questioned when he saves a sinner, let it be remembered that Jesus tasted death for that sinner. God's justice is not revoked, rather it is revealed more clearly. Thus, on the basis of Christ's death, God is "just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."[1]

3. *Conditioned by faith and repentance.*

While justification is the direct act of God, nevertheless man must meet the condition of faith and repentance. It is the mercy and grace of God in Christ that makes it possible for a guilty sinner to be justified. But each one must recognize his guilt, confess his sin, and throw himself upon the mercy of God's court of justice before he can hope to be acquitted. If he waited to present a mass of good works, expecting to be reckoned just because of them, he would be waiting for the impossible to happen. Man has neither time nor strength to rid himself of his burden of sin. Furthermore, if man could be justified by his works the essential attitude of the Christian toward God would be lost. He would become self-sufficient, self-righteous, conceited, and arrogant. But the Christian who is justified by God through Christ, in whom he puts his trust, is humble and seeks to let the power of God work through him.

There is more to faith in Christ than simply a condition which God exacts of us. He is not a tyrant God threatening us unless we do his will. He is the all-wise

[1]Romans 3: 26.

Father, knowing how he can accomplish the maximum through his children. Faith is the living union with Christ that enables God to work in and through us.

4. *It is vital rather than legal.*

Two facts are established that prevent us from thinking of justification as simply a legal transaction. One is that it is accomplished for us through the death of Christ. The benefits of his death can only be received through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Christ died and arose and ascended to the Father. Now the Spirit makes him present to us, and in us. None of the works of Christ can be enjoyed apart from the presence and work of the Spirit. That makes justification a vital experience rather than a legal transaction.

The other fact is what has just been discussed above, faith as a condition. This is our response to the pleading of the Spirit. He urges us to take our sin-problem to Christ, promising that Christ will give us a clean slate. When we do that we exercise faith in him. He gives us a new standing, a righteous status before him, and the result is a vital union of the believer and Christ through the Holy Spirit.

5. *Relation to forgiveness and regeneration.*

What has justification to do with forgiveness and regeneration? Let us try to keep the distinctions clear. While justification has reference to guilt and condemnation, forgiveness has reference to sins, collective and individual. In that God forgives our sins he removes them from the path along which we must come to him. In that he justifies us he removes the guilt and penalty, when we come to him, and thus receives us into a new

relationship with him. Without forgiveness we could not approach him. His anger and wrath produced by our sin would drive us from him.

Here is the story. The telephone rings and father answers. It is his wayward son. "O dad, I have been arrested and they've got me in police court. Yes, I'm guilty, but, dad, can't you help me? I know it breaks your heart and I don't deserve to be called your son, but I need you so much." Father's face is soft and damp as he turns from the telephone. Quickly taking his hat and coat he hurries from the house, calling as he goes, "Son is in trouble and needs me." In court he first embraces his boy, and both weep as they face each other. Then he gives his pledge to the judge that he will stand surety for his son's conduct, and the son is released, and they return home together.

The father's willingness to go to the aid of the son in trouble is forgiveness. But when he secures the son's deliverance in court and takes him home with the standing, not of a criminal, but of a good citizen, that is justification. The story doesn't quite give us the picture of God, for he is both father and judge and so his justification of us is final.

The relation between justification and regeneration should be kept in mind to avoid the error of fictitious righteousness. Someone may raise the objection that if God turns a guilty sinner loose, simply declaring him innocent, then God is not righteous and just. And the objection would hold if it were not for regeneration. In the next chapter this phase of Christian experience will be studied. It is enough here to say that whenever God justifies he also regenerates, which means that the Christian is a saved sinner—a new creation in Christ Jesus.

One night I pleaded with a man to give his heart to Christ. I could see that he wanted to be a Christian. He was deeply stirred and concerned. But he was in distress too. Some problem in the matter of becoming a Christian was troubling him. Finally he came out with it. "As I understand the Bible," he said, "no murderer can enter the Kingdom of God. And I am a murderer." I told him that he did not understand the plan of salvation aright. No man who remains a murderer can enter the Kingdom of God, but any man, regardless of the degree or nature of his sins, can be changed from a sinner to a child of God if he will repent of his sin and trust in Christ. If he would let Christ save him he would no longer be a murderer. Through justification God would declare him free of his guilt. Through forgiveness God would remove the sin that stood between them. Through regeneration God would give him a new heart, new desires and motives. In other words, God would transform him so that he could enter the Kingdom of God and be at home there. My friend grasped what I meant and made the full surrender. Then the joy that filled his heart was an inspiration to all who knew him. The next day at the morning service he said to the mother of one of his best friends, "I am praying that your son may see the light as I have seen it and be saved."

III. Adoption.

1. *Definition.*

Adoption is the act in which God makes the believer his son. It is the outward expression of the inner act

of regeneration. It marks the climax of God's saving work. Forgiveness and justification point to it as the crown of Christian experience. Here we see the purpose of all God's saving effort realized. It is to bring man into fellowship with himself. That explains all of God's dealing with sin and sinners. Christ's atoning death, the witness of the Holy Spirit, forgiveness, justification, adoption, and regeneration—all help to accomplish the adoption of many sons into this glorious relationship to God the Father.

This term has a richer meaning than we ordinarily put into it. Quite often the adopted child is thought of as being on a lower plane than the other children in the family. There is no vital connection of blood kinship between the parents and the adopted child. It is a legal transaction, with an opportunity to grow into the family spirit. Now, God's adoption of the Christian is not to be reduced to that plane. There is a vital connection established between them, for God regenerates, creates in the Christian a new life. He puts his Spirit in him. From the very first the Christian resembles God, as the child resembles the father. He becomes a son of God. So then, in adoption God receives the Christian into the family relationship with himself, making him a son indeed. Regeneration saves it from being a merely legal transaction.

Justification and adoption show the two aspects of God's character as seen in saving experience, the judicial and the paternal. In the first he is the judge dealing with the transgressor. In the second he is the Father dealing with the son. There is no conflict between the two. Neither is there any separation in time or

procedure between justification and adoption. God does both at one and the same time, and they are permanent and do not call for repetition.

2. *The Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of man.*

This is a prominent question that comes up in connection with the doctrine of adoption. If we agree that God is the creator of all things, then we must acknowledge that in that broad sense he is the Father of all men. And he is the Father of all men in a different sense from that in which he is the Father of all creation. He created man and put something of himself in man. "He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul." Further, he is the Father of Christians in a more particular sense, for he has wrought in them a more refined creative act in which he takes us into the family relationship. Thus there is a progressive revelation of the Fatherhood of God.

In like manner the Sonship of man may be viewed. In a broad sense all men are sons of God, for they are his creatures, his offspring. But God created man a free moral agent, with the power of choosing between good and evil. When he chose to sin he broke the relationship in which he stood as son to God. Not only did sin violate the relationship, but it also did violence to man's moral disposition as son. He no longer acts as son, but as an alien and an enemy. Now the best that we can say for man is that he has potentiality, capacity, for sonship. What he lacks, and must have to be a real son of God, is a renewal of that moral disposition, which is regeneration, and an acceptance with God, which is adoption. Thus there is a progressive realization of man's

sonship to God. It is based upon creation, annulled by sin, renewed in regeneration, and permanently restored in adoption.

The parable of the Prodigal Son is the best illustration of this teaching. The fatherhood of God is pictured in beautiful language. He is constant in his love for the son. There is no wavering or changing in him. He is ready to let the son choose, but he is also ready to welcome him home. The son represents wayward man, leaving God and choosing sin. After a while his way runs out. He is in want and he begins to think of his father's bounty, and then of his father's love for his children. That leads him to realize how ungrateful he has been, and how deeply he has gone in sin. But his only hope is to come back to his father, confess his sin and ask forgiveness. This he does, and what a glorious reunion it is! The father rejoices, saying, "My son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found." Thus the son, living in sin, was not a son, but was as dead to the father. In choosing sin he discarded his sonship. He still had the original constitution derived from his father, but the filial relationship was gone. He now throws himself on the mercy and love of the father and is restored to the standing and relationship of a son.

3. *The consciousness of sonship.*

This is the climax of man's side of saving experience, as adoption is the climax of God's saving work. We have an assurance now, a boldness of approach to God that we could never have had without being made the sons of God. It banishes all fear, save the fear that we shall not be good sons. It opens up vast resources of

communion and fellowship, as well as power and wisdom. He is always near and ready to hear our petitions. We can go to him with our every need and problem, as well as our joys and successes. We are the sons of God. Now we shall grow in his likeness.

Chapter VIII

REGENERATION AND SANCTIFICATION

In the last chapter we studied those phases of Christian experience that are altogether divine. The only human element that enters the accomplishment of forgiveness, justification and adoption, is the condition that is met in repentance and faith. But God acts directly. Now we come to the phases of the experience in which God acts upon the life of the believer, using means and even working in conjunction with man.

I. Regeneration.

1. *Definition.*

Now we strike a difficult task indeed. Who can say just what is the new birth and how it is wrought? Because it is a divine change wrought in the human life it is not possible for us to know all about it. There is one thing we may know with definiteness, and that is whether we have experienced it. The blind man whom Jesus had healed did not know what all the disturbance over Jesus was about, but he did know that he had received his physical sight. So it is with us. We may not know how it was accomplished, but we may know that we are now the children of God—begotten of God. Yet we want to know something, as much as possible, about the new birth, that we call regeneration.

(1) It is not the creation of a new constitution in us. That idea has been prevalent among many. It has been said that God put into us a new soul, constituted for him. On that basis sin is explained. When we do the will of God it is this new being in us that is acting according to its nature as the creature of God. And when we sin it is the old self asserting its old nature, that is of Adam and depraved by sin. This view does not hold up under a study of the Scriptures.

(2) Rather it is the creation of a new disposition. Man was created in the image of God. That means that he was constituted for God, given a capacity for God. Sin did violence to that image, but did not destroy it. It distorted, perverted, and defiled that image and separated man from God. But there was left in man the possibility of coming back to God, if only the sin problem could be solved. That is accomplished by and through Jesus Christ.

When we were talking about man's response to God's initiative in salvation we agreed that repentance is a change of attitude toward sin, a renunciation of sin. Now, regeneration is wrought in this experience of which repentance is a part. You can't have true repentance without having regeneration. If a man is not born from above his repentance and faith did not go far enough. But if he truly repents and trusts in Christ he is regenerated in that same experience. And, as repentance is a change of attitude toward sin, so regeneration is a change of disposition toward sin and Christ. It is the change wrought within us that is permanent. In creation we were constituted for Christ. In regeneration

that spiritual constitution is purged of sin, cleansed, set in a true disposition toward Christ.

(3) It is an act of God. Regeneration is an act of God rather than an achievement of man. True it is that man must meet the conditions before God can accomplish it, but there is a difference between asking God to do it for us and actually doing it ourselves. God regenerates the life of the believer.

And it is punctiliar rather than progressive. It may take man a long time to meet the conditions. He may come gradually to the point of breaking with sin and trusting in Christ, but once he repents and believes God is ready to accomplish his work of regeneration.

I was pleading with a man to repent of his sin and surrender to Christ. He said that he had a besetting sin and he was afraid he could not overcome it. He did not want to join the church unless he was sure that he would live a good Christian life. He said it was like a man who wanted to run a race. He would run a little today, a little more tomorrow, and more the next day until he would be in condition to run the race. And so he thought he would do that way about joining the church. He would practice resisting temptation until he could live a good life and then he would join the church. Then he said, "Am I not right?" I said, "No, you are wrong. You want to run a race, but you are sick in bed. Before you can train, or run at all, you need to call in a physician and ask him to give you medicine that will make you well. When you are well you can begin running the race. You need Christ to save you from your sin, and then you can live the Christian life." He saw the point. His own figure convicted him.

(4) It is the ingrafting of a new life. Regeneration is the act of God in which he renews in us the image of God. It is a vital renewal. It is the transformation of the life that is accomplished by bringing a new life power and spirit into our lives. It is somewhat like grafting a tree. Here is a tree that is not bearing fruit. It is a scrubby, scrawny tree and its fruit is likewise of inferior quality. But here is another tree that bears good fruit, and is free of defects. The experienced horticulturist will take his knife and cut a slip from the good tree and slit the scrubby tree and insert in it the part taken from the good tree. For fruit bearing purposes that operation transforms the tree. It puts new life power into it. It bears good fruit. It is not the creation of a separate tree, but the grafting of a good one into a poor one, and making a new one out of the old. That is what is accomplished in the new birth of the believer.

A little while ago I spoke of the operation of the transfusion of blood, in which the life blood of the strong is put into the veins of the weak. The weak one becomes strong. The strength that was in the blood, which was not his own but another's, becomes his own. That is a physical transaction. Regeneration is a spiritual transaction of the same sort.

The spirit that comes into the believer through the new birth leads him into a new life, a new realm of activity. The Christian has a new disposition. He now has new interests, new ideals and motives. He lives in a realm of realities that were hitherto unknown to him. Such is the new birth. It is the transformation that God works in the life of the believer that ushers the Christian into a new realm. A person can no more enter this

new realm, that is called the Kingdom of God, without the new birth experience than can the scrubby tree bear good fruit without having the good tree grafted into it.

2. *Agent.*

God accomplishes this change in our lives through the Holy Spirit as agent. That is, it is God himself, in the presence and power of the Spirit, who operates thus upon our lives. It must be a personal agent, for it is a personal change. No impersonal object could produce such a transformation of life. It must be a divine power, for no human power can so change other lives. The children of Christians are not themselves Christians until they have this change that we call regeneration. The devil is busy planting sin in their lives and may destroy them before they are saved. The only power great enough to overcome this sin that is planted in us and to transform our lives is the Holy Spirit. And every Christian must pass through this same experience of regeneration.

Why do we say that the Holy Spirit must be the agent in regeneration? Because it is such a work as only God in personal presence could accomplish. As only God could create man, so only God could regenerate him. Suppose you were standing in a certain cathedral and heard someone say that Raffael was once in that room. If you would ask the speaker how he knows that, he would point to a painting done on the wall and tell you that only Raffael, the great artist, could have done it. So it is with regeneration. The very experience itself testifies to the presence and power of God.

3. *The means used.*

While God's Spirit operates directly upon our lives he uses means—just as the surgeon uses his instruments in an operation. The Holy Spirit uses God's Word. James has this admonition, "receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."[1] That word may be planted in our lives through a message that is preached in the church, or through the personal testimony that is given by a Christian in a conversation. But it must be God's word used directly by God's Spirit.

It works out in our experience something like this. We read the Bible, or hear a gospel message preached, or a scriptural testimony given. We take it into our minds and hearts and meditate over it. It tells us how we may be saved—by faith in Christ. God's Spirit vitalizes the message so that we are led to repent and believe, and then he is able to infuse our lives with his own presence and power and we are born from above.

What then is the new birth? It is the new disposition wrought in us by the Holy Spirit through the use of God's word, when we exercise faith in Christ. It is the transformation wrought through the coming of the Spirit of God into our spirits, in a vital life-union, through which we are born into a new life of fellowship with God.

Then why is it necessary for every one to be born of the Spirit? Because the Kingdom of God is a different realm of spiritual reality from the old sphere in which we lived. We can only live in the Kingdom of God by the indwelling of God's Spirit. It makes no difference how moral a man may be, or how well educated, if he

[1]James 1: 21. The word "implanted" may be read "inborn."

does not have that Spirit in him he cannot enter that Kingdom.

4. *Assurance of regeneration.*

May we know that we have had this experience, that we have been regenerated? To be sure we may. A Christian should not be satisfied until he does know with assurance that he is a child of God, a citizen of the Kingdom of God, a regenerated spirit. There are three ways of knowing this:

(1) By the Scriptures. The Bible gives us the conditions that we must meet in order to be regenerated. They are repentance and faith. If we have met those conditions the rest is in God's hands. We may rest assured that if we do our part God will do his. He keeps his word.

(2) By experience. We know by our experience with the Holy Spirit that we have been made the children of God through the new birth. "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God."[2] It is the assurance within that increases as our fellowship with the Spirit grows.

(3) By the fruits of the life. If the life is bearing the fruits of the Spirit we may know that the life has been born of the Spirit. Read again Galatians 5: 22-24. Whenever I am disposed to question my experience of regeneration I ask myself the following questions: Do I love the souls of lost people so much that I earnestly strive to let God's Spirit work through me to reach them? Do I love God's Word and study it with relish? Do I love Christ's church and serve it with loyalty?

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[2]Romans 8: 16.

Have I consecrated my life to the advancement of the Kingdom of God through fellowship with the Spirit and for the glory of Christ? The person who is not willing to face these questions may seriously doubt the genuineness of his experience of regeneration. The one who gladly faces them and then sets out to bring the true answer to them in his life may rest assured that he is a child of God.

II. Sanctification.

1. *Definition.*

This is the climax of Christian experience. In the work of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit God approaches man with an offer of salvation. In repentance and faith man accepts the offer. In forgiveness, justification, and adoption God responds by restoring man to a happy filial relationship. In regeneration God puts his Spirit into man so that he becomes in spirit and vital behaviour a son, he is disposed toward God as a son. Now, in sanctification the Christian acts in conjunction and fellowship with the Spirit in answering the call of Christ to come up to a higher level of life and service in his Kingdom.

(1) Meaning of the word. The original root idea in the word sanctify, so far as we have been able to determine, was physical. It meant to "cut off." In all the history of the word the moral significance has been secondary, while the idea of separation has been primary. It was used by ancient non-Israelitish people to designate their priests and priestesses. They were called "the holy ones." And yet, they lived the most immoral lives imaginable. The reason they were called holy, or

sanctified, was because they were set apart, consecrated, to the service of their gods.

This word was used by the ancient Hebrews in their worship of Jehovah. The ground on which Moses stood when he saw the burning bush was called holy ground. It was holy because it was the place of Jehovah's presence and manifestation at the time. In like manner God purposed that Israel should be set apart in a peculiar relation to him for his service. Of course the word "holy" meant more when the Israelites used it than it did in the use made of it by others, because they had a greater conception of God. They thought of God as being the only true God, holy, pure, and perfect. Only that which was clean, without physical blemish, could be used in the service of God. They were never cleansed in the service of sanctification. That was attended to before they were brought before the Lord for consecration.

We find the same discrimination in the New Testament doctrine. Regeneration comes before the sanctification of the followers of Christ. The clearest expression of the doctrine of sanctification is to be found in the seventeenth chapter of John. Jesus prayed for his disciples, that they might be sanctified. The answer to his prayer for them could come only in their full sanctification. The answer involved three phases which are presented here in their logical order, namely, an act, an attitude, and a relation.

(2) It is an act of complete consecration. It is an act rather than a process. And it is consecration rather than cleansing or being made perfect. Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them in the truth." In recording the prayer John uses a verb form that stresses point action. It is

the act of sanctification. He prayed that the disciples might be set apart to his service, the same mission to which the Father set him apart.

To prove that cleansing is not directly involved in sanctification just think of Jesus' words, "I am sanctifying myself." Then turn to John 10: 36 where he referred to himself as the one "whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world." He did not have any need of cleansing, or purifying, yet he needed to sanctify himself. The only meaning that fits here is that Jesus was consecrating himself to the death of the cross in order that he might accomplish in full God's plan of salvation.

Now, the word has essentially the same meaning when applied to the disciples. They are not purged of sin in sanctification, for that is accomplished in forgiveness and regeneration. Jesus did not need forgiveness and regeneration, but he needed sanctification. The disciples needed all three. Let no man think that he can enter the sanctified life and remain on a low ethical plane. Fellowship with Christ and compromise with sin cannot continue in the same experience. "Ye must be born again" comes first. Sanctification comes afterward. You cannot have the second without the first.

The sanctification of the disciples meant that they should be fully devoted to Christ and his cross, and the cause for which he died, that they might bring the power of his atoning death to the peoples of the earth. As he died the death of the cross that the world might live through his death, so they are to consecrate themselves to Christ in the new life that the world might learn through them of his power to save.

(3) It is an attitude of life. Jesus continued in his prayer, "and on behalf of them I am sanctifying myself, in order that they might be sanctified in truth." In this last use of the verb John employs a form that indicates a state of completed action. We might translate it as follows, "in order that they might be sanctified and remain sanctified in truth." That is to say, they are to perform a certain act that will give them a fixed attitude toward Christ for all the remainder of life and eternity. That is the attitude of readiness to serve regardless of the cost, or the place, or the type of service. If Christ calls for volunteers for a special task his sanctified follower is ready to say, "Here am I, send me."

When Nathan Hale voluntarily planned his trip into enemy territory, facing almost certain death, he was simply acting in accordance with his patriotic and loyal disposition. He had made the surrender to his country, and laid his life on the altar of service, and now braving death was to him as an incidental matter. The interests of his country, to which he had dedicated his life, must be regarded as of supreme importance. If his commander needed information that could only be gained through a personal invasion of the enemy ranks, he did not have to be commissioned to go, he was ready to volunteer. So it is with the sanctified followers of Christ. They have surrendered themselves to him, they have enlisted in his army, they have put themselves on the altar that his cause might be carried on to final victory. Any special need that may arise is incidental to that first act of dedication. They are always ready to volunteer, to answer the need with their lives. Christ can count on them.

Do we mean then that sanctification is growth in grace? Not at all. We grow in grace because we are sanctified, we are not sanctified because we grow. The soldier grows in knowledge and skill because he has enlisted in the army of his country. Now that he has surrendered his life to the cause he not only grows in efficiency as a soldier, but he is willing to use his ability and his life to answer any need that may face his country. His attainment of skill is made possible by his act of surrender and his attitude of willingness to serve. Even so sanctification and growth in grace are not the same. Sanctification is the willingness and the determination to use the grace and the knowledge that we have to bring victory to the cause of Christ.

One day during the war of 1861-1865 when Captain J. P. Smith was at General Lee's headquarters the general told him to say to General Jackson that the first time he rode in that direction he would be glad to see him on a matter of no great importance. When the message was delivered General Jackson said, "I will go tomorrow morning at six o'clock, Captain Smith, and I wish you to accompany me." The next morning a snow storm was raging, but at the appointed hour Jackson was ready to get into the saddle. He rode in the face of the storm eight miles and came to Lee's headquarters just as the great leader was coming out from his breakfast. When he remonstrated with General Jackson for coming out in such fierce weather he reminded him that his message said that the matter that he wanted to see him about was of no great importance. Whereupon General Jackson replied, "General Lee's lightest wish is a

supreme command to me, and I always take pleasure in prompt obedience."

(4) It is a relation. This act and attitude involve a relation to God. It is that of ownership. The Christian who makes a full surrender to Christ thereby admits Christ's ownership of his life. Through regeneration, justification and adoption God establishes his ownership of the Christian. Through sanctification the Christian recognizes and confesses that ownership, makes it the basic principle of his life. If you want to understand Christian stewardship come back to the doctrine of sanctification. There is not any question as to what a man will do or should do with his money or his time if he has fully and completely surrendered his life to Christ. What we need in our stewardship campaigns is to get our people to let the Spirit of God lead them to sanctify themselves, set themselves apart in complete devotement to God, in answer to the prayer of Christ for us all. If we had that surrender and dedication in the hearts of our people the only campaign we would ever have to make would be one of information, to present the needs. The gifts of self and substance would come voluntarily. Christ can answer every need of his Kingdom through the sanctified lives of his followers.

There is also the relation to God's plan of redemption. In the sanctified life we are related to God as owner and Lord of the life, and we also fit into his plan for redeeming a lost world. God's plan of redemption is the way of the cross, the same cross to which Jesus sanctied himself. After a class one day a student asked me if I did not think that the Christian's greatest cross is his sin. I surprised him by answering, no! The Chris-

tian's greatest cross is the cross of Christ, borne for the sin of the world. When a Christian consecrates himself to Christ he does so on the basis of the fact and the principle of the death of Christ as a substitutionary atonement for the sin of the world.

He has appropriated to himself the saving benefits of the death of Christ. But he has come to see that the cross has a world-wide appeal, and that Christ has ordained that its reach shall extend to all mankind only through his sanctified followers. If we are to let Jesus have the answer to his prayer in us we must yield to him under the shadow of the cross. Yes, we are to take up the cross and follow him.

2. *The Agent in sanctification.*

The answer to the prayer of Christ for the sanctification of the disciples could come only through the agency of the Holy Spirit. That is the reason he prayed the Father to sanctify them. They could not do it of their own power. He could sanctify himself, but even with Christ the Father had already sanctified him, and the Spirit was with him throughout his ministry. He prayed for their sanctification because he knew that it must be a divine-human act. The answer came on the day of Pentecost when they yielded themselves completely to the control of the Spirit. He came upon them after they had prayed for him to come and when they were ready to follow him. He came to set them apart and dedicate them completely to the work for which Jesus had chosen them, and to give them the power to accomplish that work. Only as they followed the Spirit did they succeed in the work of Christ.

No wonder John, on the Isle of Patmos, received such a wondrous revelation. He was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day." God's Spirit had his way with John in a special manner that day because he had his way with John in the ordinary things every day. It was a part of God's plan of redemption that John should receive that message from Christ and pass it on to the Christians of all ages. But John never would have been ready to receive it had he not surrendered himself to the Spirit in answer to the prayer of Christ. We look back upon it all and see the unfolding of God's plan in his life. It required John's sanctification, full dedication to Christ.

In such manner does the doctrine of sanctification work out in our lives. We may not know when we make the full surrender just how God's plan will unfold in our lives. It is not necessary that we know that. It is enough to know that the plan and the power and the wisdom are with the Spirit, and that when we follow him in sanctifying ourselves to Christ we put ourselves into that life channel where we will be led by him according to that plan and power and wisdom.

3. *The medium.*

Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth." Thus he gives the medium of sanctification. His disciples are to be set apart, consecrated to him and his cause by the Spirit in the Word of God. They are to submerge their lives in God's Word. They are to study it, master it, think it, live it. They are to preach it, talk it, pray it. Study again Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost and see how much he uses the Old Testament. Study the lives of the disciples and their testimony after

Pentecost and see how faithful they are to the words of Jesus. Read again the First Epistle of John and see how he would test the genuineness of a Christian's fellowship by his possession of the truth.

Every professing Christian should examine his life in the light of the New Testament doctrine of sanctification. Has he devoted his life in unconditional surrender to the Holy Spirit for service in the Kingdom of Christ? Does he live in readiness to answer any special call of service that may come to him? Does he feed on God's Word daily?

I have given extra time and space to this subject because I believe it is the greatest need of Christians today. It is the need of preachers, teachers, laymen—all Christians. It is a phase of Christian experience that is evidently known and practiced by only a small number of Christ's followers today. Let me repeat what is stated above, Christ can answer every need of his Kingdom through the sanctified lives of his followers.

Chapter IX

THE CHURCH AND THE ORDINANCES

I. The Church.

Having accepted Christ as Saviour and yielded to him as Lord, the next step for the Christian is to unite with the church. It will be shown in this chapter that this is the inevitable process of Christian experience. We are not saved by uniting with the church, but we unite with the church because we have been saved and now want to serve Christ in his work of saving others. The relation brought about between God and the Christian through regeneration and sanctification calls for church fellowship.

1. *Definition—What is meant by a New Testament Church.*

The Greek word "ecclesia," that we translate "church," literally means "an assembly" of people convened at a public place. It was often used to designate the regular town council called for the purpose of deliberating upon matters of common interest. There is a reference in Acts 19: 39 to such use. We find the word used one hundred and fourteen times in the New Testament. In five passages it does not mean church, but refers to a general gathering or civic assembly. So there are one hundred and nine instances in which the word is properly translated church, and is used to describe a body, or assembly, of Christ's people.

The more common use points to a local assembly of Christians. They quite naturally gather in a group, for they have much in common. They have largely the same interests, they think in the same general direction, and they are commissioned to perform the same general task. This is the group expression of Christian experience. Furthermore, they are urged not to forsake the assembling of themselves together.[1]

There are some passages in which the word is used to designate a general conception of the people of God—all believers. In that sense it is frequently used today. However, it refers to the church as an institution and not as an organization. The home, abstractly speaking, is an institution set for the propagation and culture of the family. Every home, specifically speaking, is patterned in a more or less general way after the type suggested in the word home. So it is that we speak of the school. When we use the word abstractly we refer to an institution in which instruction is given by teachers to students. If we were to say, "The school is the hope of our nation's future," we would mean the type of institution in which our young people are given instruction.

It is somewhat after this fashion that the New Testament speaks of the church general. It is the type by which every local church should be patterned and of which every local church is in some sense a part. This is the force of the use of the word in Matt. 16: 18. Jesus founded his church once, and every body, or congregation, that claims that name should be constituted upon that same foundation and should follow that same general type.

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[1]Hebrews 10: 25.

The distinction is made sometimes between the church visible and the church invisible. This is just another way of speaking of the local body and the church general. It should be said here that it is not in accord with New Testament usage to speak of any denomination, or sect, as "the church." For example, Roman Catholics erroneously refer to their general organization as "the church." If the church general, or universal, is meant it should be so spoken of as to include all believers in Christ. If a group of local bodies is designated they should be referred to as the churches.

So we may say that the church is a body of baptized believers, founded by Christ for the purpose of spreading his Kingdom on earth. This definition includes three statements that may be elaborated briefly.

(1) A body of baptized believers. A New Testament church is a body of believers in Christ, who have been baptized and have banded themselves together for the purpose of carrying forward his work in the world. When we come to the ordinances we shall look into the meaning of baptism. It is enough to say here that it is a requisite to church membership. This is not stated in so many words anywhere in the New Testament, but it is everywhere implied. The disciples were baptized. Jesus included it in the Commission. On the day of Pentecost the disciples admonished the people to repent and be baptized. Paul was baptized in Damascus by representatives of the church whom he went there to persecute. Cornelius and his company were baptized after Peter preached to them. The Philippian jailer and his family were baptized when they understood the plan of salvation.

So it is very evident that baptism was required of all who became followers of Christ. There was, then, a twofold prerequisite condition to membership in a church, the confession of faith in Christ and receiving the rite of New Testament baptism.

There are two clear examples of the practice of examining candidates for church membership before they were admitted. One is in the ninth chapter of Acts, where Paul sought to join the church in Jerusalem. The disciples were afraid of him and would not receive him until Barnabas recommended him to the members. The other instance is in the tenth chapter of Acts. While Peter was preaching, the Holy Spirit came upon all who heard him, including Cornelius and his company. Then Peter asked if there was any question to be raised about baptizing the new converts. No one objected and so the ordinance of baptism was administered. It is in line with this scriptural procedure that Baptists examine candidates for church membership and then baptize them before admitting them to full fellowship in the church.

(2) Founded by Christ. Jesus founded his church on the disciples' faith in him as the Christ, the Son of the living God. The Scripture treatment of this is given in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew. When Jesus said to Peter "flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto you, but my Father who is in heaven," he gave his reason for making Peter's confession the rock-basis of his church. This gives us the first principle in understanding the New Testament church. It is constituted in Christ through a divine-human agency. This will ever remain its basis. In Baptist churches we require the

candidate for membership to make a confession of Christ that is patterned after Peter's confession, and we believe that in every case where it is genuine the Spirit inspires it.

It is in line with this thought that Paul writes of Christ as being the head of the church.[2] All church activities must take their direction from him. He is to be the center and the bond of unity of all things. As he is the Lord of the Christian's life, so he must reign as Lord among Christians in their church life. It is the duty and the function of the church to magnify Christ as the head.

(3) Purpose. The members of a New Testament church covenant together for a definite purpose—to spread the Kingdom of Christ on earth. As the word church has two applications, local and general, so the purpose of the church may be seen in two aspects, cultivation and propagation. Baptized believers in Christ band themselves together for the cultivation of fellowship with God and each other. They meet for worship, prayer, praise, and the study of God's Word. Their fellowship with God should grow in meaning and power. Their church life should be for the edification, the spiritual development, of the saints. The services should help the Christians to understand God's plan for their lives, and to realize the presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

The church is also constituted for the propagation of the gospel and the Kingdom of Christ. This includes

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[2]Ephesians 1: 22; 4: 15; 5: 23; Colossians 1: 18.

evangelistic and missionary activities in the local community and abroad. The great commission was given to the people of Christ as their marching orders. The church that is not missionary is not only anti-scriptural, as a New Testament church it is an anomaly, but it is also doomed to failure in every sense.

2. *Authority.*

Now comes the question of authority with reference to the church. Wherein does its authority reside? How and by whom is it exercised? These, and many other questions clamor for answer when the subject of authority is raised. We cannot answer all of them, but we can best understand the whole matter by seeing it in three relations.

(1) Within the local body—Autonomous and democratic. The local church is autonomous, that is, it derives its authority from within. In all matters of organization, polity, and general procedure the members of the body act in accordance with their own convictions and on the basis of their interpretation of the will of Christ. This, of course, should always be under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. No church or group of churches has any authority over any other church. Each church is free and independent. The members of the church meet in executive session and draft their own constitution, write their own by-laws, and conduct their affairs as they choose.

There have been instances in which Baptist churches have come to realize that their constitutions granted too much power to the deacons, or some committee, or board. In such case the church meets in executive session and revises the constitution to distribute power and

responsibility in accordance with the desires of the members. The only condition to be met is that it shall be done by vote of a majority of the members. This is church autonomy. It is of the very genius of a Baptist church.

The church is democratic in government. It is the purest democracy to be found on earth. Every member has equal authority and rights with every other member. The pastor has no more authority than any other member. He may exert a greater influence than some of the other members, but he has only the authority that the church chooses to vest in him.

Sufficient examples may easily be found in the New Testament to support the position that a gospel church is autonomous and democratic. We may notice the election of Matthias by the "one hundred and twenty" to take the place left vacant by Judas (Acts 1: 15-22); the choosing and setting apart of the seven by "the multitude of the disciples" (Acts 6: 2-6); the appointment of Barnabas as a committee by "the church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts 11: 22), the setting apart of Barnabas and Saul by the church at Antioch (Acts 13: 13); the election of the presbyters by the vote of the churches (Acts 14: 23); the sending of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem on the circumcision controversy by the church at Antioch (Acts 15: 3); and the recognition of the right of the members of the church to exercise discipline (1 Cor. 5: 4). Yet other examples might be cited.

(2) Relations with other churches—co-operation. When local churches unite in the work of the Kingdom, forming denominations, it should be solely on the basis of co-operation. Two or more churches may work to-

gether so long as they agree. But one may withdraw at any time, and the others can exercise no authority to restrain it. Just as all individuals may exercise equal privileges in the church, so all churches are entitled to equal privileges in the Kingdom of God. This principle may be seen in application among Southern Baptists. Our churches are organized into associations, state conventions, and the Southern Baptist Convention. Yet all of these relations are voluntary. Neither the association, nor the state convention, nor the Southern Baptist Convention, can exercise the least authority over any individual church that may send messengers to it. They may withdraw fellowship from a local church, but further than that they cannot go. This principle sometimes works to produce temporary embarrassment, but in the end it works out for the best. We may well adhere to it, for it is a New Testament principle and it has been tried and found worthy.

Members of one denomination should maintain cordial relations with members of other evangelical denominations. But the only basis of vital or organic relations among denominations is agreement in doctrine. When two of them agree in doctrine they become one. A proposed union for convenience is superficial.

(3) Relation with civil governments—separation. The relation of the church to civil government should be one of cordial separation and mutual respect. The state functions in one realm, the church in another. Each should recognize the sphere of the other, and not transgress its rights. The state should recognize the right of individuals to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. It should never seek to thrust

upon its citizens any form of religion, nor should it show partiality toward any denomination or sect by granting favors, exemptions, or indulgences. On the other hand, the church should never seek civil authority, or governmental power in the state. It should encourage the finest spirit of patriotism and loyalty toward the state. The church of Christ in a Christian country should influence the whole life of the people with increasing power, but never as an organization within the government, or allied to the government. Its influence should always be through the witness of the gospel.

3. *Officers.*

We have no record of any prescribed form of organization of the church given during the earthly ministry of Christ. He founded the church in the lives of his disciples and gave to them the ordinances and the commission. They constituted the nucleus of the first church. The form of organization that it took came through gradual development. Judas was the treasurer, and Simon Peter seems to have been recognized as holding some position of leadership. While the disciples waited and prayed ten days before Pentecost they were sufficiently organized to elect a successor to Judas. Then as the church grew after Pentecost the need for deacons arose, and they were chosen. And so the organization developed. From that first church the disciples went out to establish other churches after the same order and for the same purpose. When we compare the thoroughgoing organization that is being put into effect in the churches today with the simple form in vogue in the first century, we may well ask what is the authoritative standard by which we are to gauge our organization. The answer is

that we are to follow the New Testament as closely as possible. All details of organization should fit into the general plan found there and promote the purpose of the church. That plan calls for two groups of officers.

(1) Bishops, elders, or pastors. The New Testament uses three terms to designate this group of officers. They are bishop, elder, and pastor. The most commonly used word is elder. It literally means an older person. It is a term brought over from common use in Israel. It appears that some of the churches in the New Testament had several elders. The word bishop is not so commonly used, but the office was evidently recognized in every church. The word means an overseer. The term pastor is used only once[3] with reference to an officer in the church. But there is reference to the work of a pastor in other places.[4] These three terms seem to be used almost interchangeably to refer to the officer that Baptists call pastor. He is an officer of the local church, not of any group of churches with general jurisdiction. He is called of the Spirit and set apart to a life of spiritual influence and leadership. He has no authority to govern or control in the sense of commanding and enforcing obedience. He is both servant and master. In his own eyes he is to be servant, in the eyes of the church he is to be master and leader. In the end his leadership and mastery must depend not so much upon his official position or any authority bestowed upon him as upon the weight of his character and the influence which he has come to wield.

(2) Deacons. The word "deacon" literally means "servant," and is also frequently translated "minister."

[3]Ephesians 4: 11.
[4]Acts 20: 28; 1 Peter 5: 1, 2.

"The lack of any detailed instructions in regard to the office gives us to understand that they might be charged with any duties at the pleasure of the church."[5] It is strange that the term does not occur in the book of Acts. In the sixth chapter we have the account of the selection and ordination of seven men to assist in some routine affairs of the church. This seems to be the origin of the office of deacon, though they were not so designated. Later they appear to be charged with greater responsibilities, such as preaching and assisting in the ordinances. Our custom of having the deacons pass the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper probably dates back to apostolic times. They were ministering servants, while the pastors, or bishops, are ministering leaders. They are not given any more authority in the government of the church than other members. The qualifications of the office of deacon are given in 1 Tim. 3: 8-13.

There may have been other officers in some of the churches whose activities are referred to in the New Testament. The twelve had their treasurer. The Jerusalem church most assuredly had a treasurer—it may be that the seven men chosen in the sixth chapter of Acts constituted a financial board. It seems that the churches must have had clerks, for they kept records of their membership. They very probably chose their officers as their needs arose. And so may we do today.

II. Ordinances.

The ordinances of the church are two, baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are called ordinances because they were ordained by Christ to be observed by the

[5]Dargan, "The Doctrines of Our Faith," p. 168.

church. They are rites observed by the authority of Christ to the church. They are sometimes called sacraments. Neither term is found in the New Testament. They are words adopted for convenience to designate both baptism and the Lord's Supper. The term "sacrament" implies that there is some saving benefit to be derived from participating in it. There is no basis in the New Testament for such a view of either baptism or the Lord's Supper. The word "ordinance" implies that it is given by authority and that observance is required as an act of obedience. This is the word that Baptists generally use.

1. *Baptism.*

Baptism is the act through which the believer publicly symbolizes his confession of Christ and identifies himself with the Church of Christ. It is an ordinance in the keeping of the church, to be administered by the authority of the local church. After the convert appears in a public service making his confession, and giving evidence of his repentance of sin and trust in Christ, and applying to the church for membership, he is then baptized and received into the full fellowship of the church. Baptism is administered by one authorized by the church, who is himself a baptized believer in Christ.

(1) Form of baptism. As to the form of baptism according to the New Testament there is general agreement today. It is an act of immersion, in which the whole body of the believer is brought down under the water and then raised. Our word "baptize" is the Anglicized form of the Greek word "baptizo," which means "to dip," or "immerse." All the standard lexicons give this as the meaning. The Greek had other words to

mean "sprinkle," "pour," "moisten," and so on. There are many who agree that the New Testament form of baptism is immersion, but insist that the form is not important. They say it is the meaning that should be preserved. Baptists hold that both are important and should be preserved, and that the form cannot be changed without compromising the meaning.

(2) The meaning of baptism. Baptism symbolizes some of the essential truths of Christianity. In the first place it symbolizes the remission of sins, the renunciation, or burial, of the old life, the cleansing from unrighteousness, and the resolve to walk in a new life of fellowship with Christ. It should be kept in mind that there is a distinction between the symbol and the truth that it symbolizes. Of course baptism itself does not remit our sins. God does that when we repent and believe, asking him to forgive us. It is not the act of renouncing the old life, the believer has already done that. Baptism simply pictures it. It does not actually cleanse a person's life of sin, for material water cannot cleanse a spiritual soul. The cleansing takes place immediately upon the surrender to Christ. It is not the beginning of the new life, for that comes when we put our trust in Christ. Baptism is the act that symbolizes all these. There is no saving benefit in it, it is in no sense essential to salvation, the believer submits to it as an act of loving obedience to show forth these truths.

Again, baptism symbolizes the mystical union of the believer with Christ in his death. Without his death and resurrection the ordinance would have no meaning.[6]

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[6]Read Romans 6: 1-11, and 1 Peter 3: 21, 22, for the scriptural basis of this spiritual interpretation of baptism.

Thus we may see why we insist that the form of baptism is important. This meaning cannot be symbolized by a substitute form.

(3) Obligation to be baptized. Every believer should be baptized. It was ordained of Christ. He submitted to it in order to institute it in his example. His disciples were baptized and baptized others. He gave them the commission in which he included the formula of baptism—"in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." On the day of Pentecost, when the people were pricked in their hearts under the preaching of the gospel, Peter urged them to be baptized. Thus, because Christ instituted it and commanded that it should be perpetually observed, and because of the meaning that it symbolizes, every Christian should be baptized.

2. *The Lord's Supper.*

This is the second ordinance of the church. There are only two, and there is no authority for increasing the number. The Roman Catholic Church has seven and teaches that saving benefit is to be derived from participation in them. This is a twofold perversion of Scripture teaching.

(1) Meaning of the Supper. In the main there are two views as to the meaning of the Lord's Supper. The first regards it as a sacrament, administering saving grace to the participant. In line with this view the Roman Catholic Church teaches that the bread is actually the body of Christ, that when the worshiper takes the consecrated wafer into his mouth he literally eats the body of Christ. When the wafer is brought into the room the people bow down and worship it as being

the very Christ. Others hold that the real presence of Christ is in the bread and wine. Christ is in some way mingled with the one eating the Supper. All such forms of this view are contrary to the New Testament.

The other general view is that the bread and wine are only symbols of the body and blood of Jesus. The Lord's Supper commemorates Christ's death as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Here, again, the distinction between the symbol and the truth symbolized should be made. The symbol is the Supper, and the truth is Christ's atonement for sin. We observe the ordinance as a memorial feast, in obedience to Christ, and to keep alive the promise of his return to his people at the end of the gospel age. This is the generally accepted view among Baptists.

We have the record of the institution of the Supper in the following passages: Matt. 26: 26-29; Mark 14: 22-25; Luke 22: 17-20; and 1 Cor. 11: 23-25. Every Christian should read these passages often, and meditate upon them. According to Paul's account in 1 Cor. 11, Jesus gave the ordinance, saying, "this do in remembrance of me—for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come."

(2) The obligation to observe the Supper. The Lord's Supper should be observed by baptized believers in the fellowship of the church. Christ instituted it among the disciples and commanded them to keep it as a memorial feast. Whenever it is referred to in the New Testament it is either taught or implied that it is to be observed by followers of Christ, baptized believers. There is all too much laxness among church members today in this matter. Many of them seem to think that it is of very

little importance, and so some will go for months and years without participating in the observance of it. Some churches will fail to have the service for months, or a year or more. Since we believe that it symbolizes the truth stated above, and since it is to be kept in loving obedience and commemoration, every local church and every Christian should observe it regularly, intelligently, and devoutly.

As a summary of the Baptist position concerning the church consider the following statement from Dr. A. H. Strong:

> The Essential Principles of a Baptist Church.
>
> 1. The unity, sufficiency and sole authority of Scripture as the rule both of doctrine and of polity;
>
> 2. Credible evidence of regeneration and conversion as prerequisite to church membership;
>
> 3. Immersion only, as answering to Christ's command of baptism, and to the symbolic meaning of the ordinance;
>
> 4. The order of the ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper as of divine appointment, as well as the ordinances themselves;
>
> 5. The right of each member of the church to a voice in its government and discipline;
>
> 6. Each church, while holding fellowship with other churches, solely responsible to Christ.
>
> 7. The freedom of the individual conscience, and the total independence of church and state.

I ought to add, however, that the duty of every believer to be baptized on profession of faith implies his acceptance of Christ's deity and atonement.

Baptism "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" cannot imply supreme allegiance to the Father and only subordinate allegiance to Jesus Christ. Baptists cannot be Unitarians, and Unitarians cannot be Baptists. Baptism is the outward sign of a previous spiritual union, by faith, with the Christ who died for our sins and rose again for our justification, and Baptists can have no church fellowship with those who deny the atonement of Christ.

Chapter X

DEATH AND THE LIFE BEYOND

We come in this final chapter to take a very brief view of what we believe about the future life. The doctrine of immortality was discussed in the third chapter, and so we shall not touch upon that here. We assume now a belief in the immortality of the soul and proceed to discuss some of the doctrines that it involves, or implies.

I. Death.

There are two distinct forms of death, physical and spiritual. We note them in that order.

1. *Physical.*

Physical death is the door through which we pass into eternity. It is the separation of the spirit, or soul, from the body. It is set forth in the Bible as the penalty of sin. God told Adam[1] that if he partook of the forbidden fruit he would "surely die." Paul wrote that "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin."[2] And again, "the wages of sin is death."[3]

2. *Spiritual.*

Spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God. So the New Testament speaks of unregenerate people as

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[1]Genesis 2: 17.
[2]Romans 5: 12.
[3]*Ibid.*, 6: 23.

being dead in trespasses and sins.[4] The picture of it is found in the story of the prodigal son.[5] The son went away from his father, beyond his father's reach. He rebelled against his father's love and the government of the home. And the father said that his son was dead.

We walk into a room where the body of a dead man rests. We clasp him by the hand, but he does not return the grip. We speak to him, but he does not hear. We stand before him, but he does not see. We put a morsel of food in his mouth, but he does not taste. We put a flower under his nose, but he does not smell it. He does not respond to any of our approaches. He is dead. We say the spirit of the man has left the body. That is physical death. Spiritual death is like it, only the separation is of the soul from God. We preach the gospel to a man who is dead in his sins, but he does not hear. We hold out the hand of Christian fellowship to him, but he does not return the clasp. We offer him the bread of life, but he does not taste it. We hold up the Saviour before him, but he does not see him. He does not respond to the appeal of the gospel. He is dead—spiritually dead. The Spirit of God is not in him.

Spiritual death becomes eternal death when the unredeemed soul leaves the body. While it was in the body there was a possibility that the attitude of sinful rebellion might be changed and the soul saved by Christ. But beyond death that attitude is permanent. The separation of the soul from God that began here continues there. The rebellion against God that is wilful here is final there.

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[4]See Ephesians 2: 1, 5; Colossians 2: 13.

[5]Luke 15.

3. *Physical death for the Christian.*

The soul that trusts in Christ is quickened to life, and spiritual death is abolished for that soul. The terror of physical death for the unsaved is that it makes spiritual death eternal. The soul passes out into eternal darkness, forever away from the light that radiates from God. The redeemed man must experience physical death, unless Christ should return during his earthly life, but it has been transformed for him. It was an experience to be dreaded until Christ came into his life, but now it is looked forward to as a glorious entrance into a richer and more beautiful life. The reason Jesus agonized and suffered in his death, and really dreaded it, was that he was enduring the death of sin for sinful man. Paul looked forward to death, even longed for it, because Christ had robbed death of its sting for him. Death for Paul was his opportunity to enter into the full presence of Christ.

A good friend of mine came very near death's door some years ago, so near that she could sense what death is like. When she rallied and began to recover she was sorely disappointed. There was such an exhilaration in death for her as she approached it that she wanted to go on. Then to come back to the earthly life with all of its limitations and sorrows was such a disappointment that it was a long time before she became reconciled to it. Now she sees God's purpose in keeping her here through these years, but she yet looks forward to death as a triumphal transition in which she will be taken into the presence of Christ. This is typical of the meaning of death for the Christian.

The grace of God is given to the Chrisitan according to his needs, and according to his prayer for it and his reliance upon it. In the full possession of health and strength he perhaps thinks little of death. When he does think of it he probably seeks to put it as far from him as possible. Through lack of understanding of death he may even dread it. But when he approaches it and asks God for strength to experience it, the grace of God becomes very real and sustains him. And death becomes for him a glorious entrance into the presence of Christ.

II. The Intermediate State.

The soul passes through death into a state of existence that is comparable in some respects to the state of the soul here. The attitude toward God is formed here. If it is unbelief here it will be unbelief there. If it is trust here it will be trust there. The intermediate state is tentative, and yet it is permanent. It is tentative in that it is preliminary to the resurrection and judgment. It is permanent in that the disposition of the soul toward God is fixed.

1. *It is disembodied, but conscious existence.*

The soul leaves the body. It goes into a spirit realm, while the body returns to the earth. The spirit of man lives on, but the body decays. Since it is an existence without a body it is referred to as a state rather than a place. My soul dwells in my body now—that is a place. My soul is at peace with God—that is a state. Now, we cannot conceive of the soul, a living entity, passing out of the body without going to some place. That is

because we can think only in terms of space and time. Nevertheless we must agree that the soul goes into a spirit realm, where it awaits the resurrection when it will be given its resurrection body.

In the intermediate state the soul is conscious. It continues beyond death as a self-conscious personality. In the story that Jesus told about the death of Lazarus and Dives conscious activity is emphasized. Dives remembers his lost brothers at home and tries to intercede for them.

2. *A Twofold state.*

There is a division in the intermediate state between the redeemed and the lost. The Biblical term for this general realm of departed spirits is hades. Within hades the redeemed live in one state—that of blessed fellowship with God—while the unrighteous continue in miserable separation from God. Between them there is an impassable chasm. One cannot change his state once he goes there. Neither can it be changed for him by anyone in this life. Isn't it true that the regenerate and the unregenerate live in different realms here? The Christian lives for Christ and the salvation of his fellow man. He centers his mind on the things of the Kingdom of God. The lost man, who may be living next door to the Christian, lives in a realm that is so different that thousands of miles cannot measure the difference. He lives for self and in sin. He centers his mind on things of the world and the kingdom of evil. So it is in the intermediate state. The difference is that here the lost may repent and be saved into the Kingdom of God. There the separation is fixed.

The Christian goes through death into hades to be with Christ. He goes immediately into the presence of Christ. There is no wait or sleep for the soul between death and entering the presence of Christ. We should keep in mind that hades is not hell. Hades is the realm of disembodied spirits, good and evil, awaiting the resurrection. Hell is the final abode of the wicked. In hades the Christian is in the presence of Christ. That does not mean that Christ is limited to hades. He is omnipresent. The soul is limited, and so remains in this state or realm until the resurrection. Christ is there with the Christian and elsewhere. We shall realize his presence more fully there than is possible here.

III. The Second Coming of Christ.

Only the most important aspects of the doctrine of Christ's return to earth can be touched upon here. It is a subject for a book in itself, and many have been written on it. We shall have to be content with setting forth two or three general statements about it.

1. *It is emphasized in the New Testament.*

When Jesus was anticipating his death and withdrawal from earth, he promised his disciples that he would return. Statements alluding to his second coming occur frequently in his teachings concerning the future growth and consummation of the Kingdom.[6] When the disciples stood on Olivet gazing into the sky after their vanished Lord, two angels reminded them of his promise, assuring them that he would come again.[7] The

[6]See Matt. 16: 27, 28; Matt. 24: 25; 26: 64; Mark 13; Luke 19: 12c; John 14.
[7]Acts 1: 10, 11.

disciples accepted the promise and taught people to prepare for and expect his return.[8]

It should be pointed out here that some Scripture passages that are ordinarily interpreted as referring to the personal return of Christ in all probability point to subordinate comings, or historical events in the growth of the Kingdom. Such would be the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, and the destruction of Jerusalem. These events in a very distinct sense spread the Kingdom, and wherever the Kingdom is propagated the glory and power of Christ must increase on earth. However, in addition to these passages there are many that point very clearly to the personal return of Christ.

2. *Time unrevealed.*

When the return of Christ to earth is to take place we do not know. Jesus said, "of that day or that hour knows no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." We do well to keep that in mind when we are tempted to work out a chronological schedule involving the second coming. That he is coming some day is clearly taught. When it is to be is unknown and unknowable. It behooves us to be in the attitude of expectancy, but never to seek to predict the time.

There is a passage in the twentieth chapter of Revelation that has given some Christians much concern. It is the prophecy with reference to the Millennium, which is described as a thousand year period in which Satan will be confined and the Kingdom of righteousness will thrive upon the earth. The point of controversy is

[8]See 1 Peter 1: 6, 7; James 5: 7; 1 Thess. 4: 16; 1 John 2: 28; Rev. 1: 7.

whether Christ will come before or after the Millennium. The Bible doesn't clear up that point for us. There are some passages that seem to point one way, and other passages that seem to support the other view. The only clear conclusion that we can reach, and upon which we can get agreement, is that Christ is coming and he will establish his supremacy over Satan. The question of when it will happen with reference to the Millennium we cannot answer positively.

3. *Outward and visible return.*

It is to be an outward, visible and personal return of Christ. In Acts 1: 11, we have both the fact and the manner of his coming emphasized. He is to come "in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." As he went away visibly, objectively, so he will return visibly, objectively. Paul declares that "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." And in Rev. 1: 7 we read, "behold he comes with the clouds, and every eye shall see him."

4. *The Christian's attitude toward Christ's return.*

It should be one of expectancy. As the disciples expected the return of Christ during their generation, so should we expect it in ours. There are two reasons for this. One is that no one knows when it is to be, and so we should be ready for it at any time. It can occur in this generation and be in keeping with all Scripture. The other is that the attitude of expectancy will keep us closer to Christ and more alert in his service.

The Christian's attitude should also be one of obedience to the Holy Spirit. We are not to wait in idleness

for the return of Christ. We are to be busy at the work of the Kingdom, in fellowship with the Spirit, preparing for his return. There is a purpose in the delay. That purpose is in the propagation of the Kingdom, and is to be accomplished by Christ's followers under the guidance of the Spirit.

IV. The Resurrection.

The Bible teaches, and Christians generally believe, that there will be a general bodily resurrection of the dead. As a doctrine it is involved in the belief in immortality. Many peoples beyond the reach of the Bible, notably the ancient Egyptians, have held to a belief in a bodily resurrection as a part of their doctrine of the immortality of the soul. However, only Christianity can render a clear statement of the doctrine and put it on a sure basis. There are three phases of the doctrine that should be mentioned here.

1. *It is based on the resurrection of Christ.*

The resurrection of Christ is the cornerstone upon which is built the hope of the general resurrection, and, more particularly, of believers in Christ. Everywhere in the book of Acts the resurrection of Christ is assumed and made the basis of the gospel appeal. In nearly every instance when a Gospel message is preached the resurrection of Christ is brought in for emphasis. Because he arose he lives. And because he lives we, too, shall live. Christ broke the bonds of death, establishing his authority over it, and some day he will assert that authority on our behalf and raise us. Read again the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians for Paul's

statement of the relation of Christ's resurrection to our doctrine of the general resurrection. "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first fruits of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead."[9]

2. *It is to be accomplished through the presence and power of Christ.*

Jesus taught the doctrine of the resurrection, basing it upon his vital connection with it. He gave Martha a glorious lesson concerning it, saying, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live." In the fifth Chapter of John he declares that the dead shall hear his voice and come forth from the tombs; "they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment." Paul connects the resurrection directly with the second coming of Christ, saying that when Christ descends "the dead in Christ shall rise first."

3. *It is to be a resurrection of the body.*

Here, again, the resurrection of Christ has an important bearing upon our doctrine. His body was raised. Our bodies will be raised. There are many difficulties involved in this phase of the doctrine. How is the body raised? After it has returned to the earth, how will it be gathered out of the earth? What of the man whose body is burned and his ashes scattered to the wind from an airplane? To answer these difficulties some have taken the position that it is not to be a resurrection of the body, but a sort of "spiritual resuscitation." Such

[9] 1 Cor. 15: 20, 21.

a position is in direct conflict with the teaching of the New Testament. The doctrine is very positively and clearly stated that it is to be a resurrection of the body. How it is to be raised we do not know. Paul throws some light on the problem in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. There he sets forth that it is to be a spiritual body, that is, it is to be a body adapted to the use of the spirit in a spiritual realm. It will differ greatly from the present natural body. This natural body will be raised a spiritual body. This body of corruption will be raised in incorruption. This body of dishonor is to be raised in glory. Yet there is to be a connection between the old body and the new. The old is sown, the new is raised from it. As the grain is sown and a new stalk comes from it in due season, so the body is sown and a resurrection body is brought forth.

V. The Judgment.

Following the resurrection of the dead will come the last judgment and the final awards to the wicked and to the righteous. There is a principle of judgment in operation now, which in no sense is to take the place of the final judgment. Rather does it lead up to the last day in which all lines of evidence and all records that bear upon judgment will be brought into review before God and his people.

1. *The fact.*

The fact of the judgment is one of the most positive doctrines of the Bible. In many sections of the Old Testament this principle of the judgment is taught in unmistakable terms.[10] There it is usually pictured in

[10]Obadiah 15-17; Isaiah 2; Mal. 3: 2-6; and many other passages.

connection with the Day of the Lord. It is in the teaching of Jesus that the great final judgment takes definite shape.[11] Peter[12] and Paul[13] and others take it up and add emphasis to it.

2. *The Judge.*

God in Christ is to be the Judge in the last day. In Matthew 25: 31-46 Jesus pictures the judgment when he will come in his glory, with all the holy angels with him, take his seat upon the throne and mete out judgment to all the nations. He is qualified to exercise the authority of the final judge because of his unique relations to God and to men. As the Son of God he is the revelation of God, and the Saviour of men. He is God dealing with men. It is fitting that the Christ of God, who reveals to men what God expects of them and what he is willing to bestow upon them, shall sit in judgment upon men in the last day.

Christ is also qualified to judge because he is the Son of man. He knows men. He was tempted in all points as we are tempted, but he did not sin. Surely his sympathy with man will temper his uncompromising righteousness. We will have on the judgment bench in the last day our elder brother and best friend.

3. *The Subjects.*

All are to be judged—the dead, "small and great," all nations, redeemed and lost, and perhaps even the evil angels.[14] It will be universal.[15]

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[11]Matt. 11: 20-24; 12: 36; 25: 31-46; John 5: 26-29.
[12]Acts 10: 42; 1 Peter 4: 5; 2 Peter 2: 9.
[13]Acts 17: 31; 24: 24, 25; Romans 2: 3, 5, 16; 1 Cor. 4: 5; 2 Cor. 5: 10 and other passages.
[14]Jude 6.
[15]See Matt. 25: 31-46; 2 Peter 2: 4-9; Jude 6; Rev. 20: 12.

4. *The Basis.*

On what basis will men be judged? The Scriptures have something to say about that. There are two general lines that judgment will follow. The first will be the relation of men to God. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and so are under condemnation. God has provided a way of escape through Jesus Christ. To refuse to accept his offer of salvation is to invite greater condemnation and to reveal character that is confirmed in sin.[16]

The second basis of judgment will be the works of men.[17] The relation of trust in Christ will bear fruit of one kind, while the relation of rebellion against God will bear fruit of another kind. The Christian will strive to have an abundant harvest of good deeds done by the grace of God dwelling in him. He is saved by Christ through faith, but he will receive the judgment of awards for the works done in the flesh. The wicked will be condemned both for his rejection of Christ and for his evil deeds.

5. *The Purpose.*

What purpose will be accomplished in the judgment? It will not be the discovery of character, in the sense that we have our courts to determine whether accused men are guilty. That is determined here and is known in the mind of God. But the judgment will be for the manifestation of character. "We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each

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[16]See John 3: 18, 19; Romans 2: 16.
[17]Matthew 25: 34-46; 2 Cor. 5: 10.

one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad."[18]

The result of the judgment will be the vindication of the justice of God. Sometimes we raise the question concerning the happiness of the saved in heaven if they know that some of their loved ones are in everlasting punishment. How can one be happy knowing that his brother or sister is in the darkness outside? When we take the purpose of the judgment into consideration that question fades away. After the judgment we will see that God has done all things well. And with that extra knowledge we will not desire to have one detail of his sovereign control of the universe changed.

VI. Hell.

We must recognize the restraint of the Scriptures in dealing with the doctrines concerning last things. And we should remember that the language is largely figurative, especially in picturing the final states, hell and heaven. Yet that figurative language carries a heavy burden of truth. It is of prime interest to note that the bulk of the New Testament teaching concerning hell is to be found in the recorded sayings of Jesus. The compassionate Saviour earnestly warns against the punishment to come. It is in his spirit of seeking to save men that we should approach this painful subject.

1. *State.*

Hell is a state. It may be best understood from two angles. In the first place, it is a state of utter moral depravity. Hell is the fulfilment of selfishness, it is the

[18] 2 Cor. 5: 10.

climax of rebellion and anarchy, it is the full harvest of sin with all of its pollution, defilement and death. Sin will continue in the environment that the devil, evil angels and wicked souls will produce.

In the second place, hell is a state of suffering and punishment. Exactly what is meant by the terms "fire" and "brimstone" in the biblical description is difficult to understand or explain. But certain it is that they carry the terrible truth that wicked souls will suffer in punishment for their sins—a suffering that is beyond the power of the human tongue to describe.

Will all be punished in the same measure? No, there are to be degrees in the punishment of the unrighteous. According to the light that men have will their penalty be measured. "And that servant who knew his Lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes."[19]

2. *Place.*

Southeast of Jerusalem was a valley where, for a long time, the idol Moloch was worshiped. Little children were thrown into his fiery arms and consumed in the flames. Because of their cries it came to be known as the Valley of Lamentation, or the Valley of Hinnom. Those horrible sacrifices were abolished by Josiah,[20] but the Jews so abhorred the place that they cast into it all manner of refuse, dead bodies of animals, and of criminals who had been executed. Fires were constantly needed to consume the dead bodies, and so the place was

[19]Luke 12: 47, 48.
[20]2 Kings 23: 10.

called "Gehenna of fire." It is this word Gehenna that the New Testament uses to describe the place of punishment appointed for the wicked after death. It points to a place that is just as real as that valley outside the city of Jerusalem.

Hell as a place is a necessary part of the explanation of God's sovereign control over his universe. There must be harmony in the Kingdom of God. That means voluntary submission to the will of God in all things. For those who refuse to obey him a place outside the Kingdom must be reserved. There are two reasons for that. One is that God will not force man to obey him. And the other is that every soul is immortal. Since God cannot and will not annihilate wicked souls, and since he will not force them to obey, there must be a place provided for them where they can live on in their chosen path of sin. That place is hell.

3. *Everlasting punishment.*

In the Valley of Gehenna bodies were burned and consumed. Lest we should think that the punishment of the wicked in hell is soon completed Jesus used the phrase "everlasting punishment."[21] He said that in that place "their worm dieth not."[22]

Someone raises the question, "If they repent, will not God forgive them and save them from their place of torment?" The answer is that they will not repent. This we know because they will be confirmed in their sins and there will be no inclination to think of how their wickedness affects God. Repentance comes as a result of the work of God's Spirit. If they rebel against

[21]Matt. 25: 46.
[22]Mark 9: 48.

his Spirit here they will not repent without his help there.

VII. Heaven.

It is fitting that we should close our study of the doctrines with a brief discussion of heaven. We do not like to dwell upon thoughts of punishment, save for the purpose of warning the lost. But our hearts glow with hope as we think of what God is holding in store for the righteous. There are three aspects of the teaching concerning heaven that we notice briefly.

1. *State.*

Heaven is a state of perfect happiness. There will be the full fruition of faith in Christ. All that we have sought to do here for the glory of God we shall be able to do there. In utter unselfishness, pure desire, righteousness of motive and deed we shall be happy. Sin with all of its blight and poison will be done away—no more sickness, pain, sorrow, nor death! We shall be changed, our characters will be purged of all iniquity, and we shall be good. We shall be like him. In the goodness of refined character we shall have joy unbounded in serving God.

In addition to the state of perfect peace and happiness that will be the harvest of faith in Christ there will be the element of reward. We are not to serve Christ here with a view to receiving reward for what we do, but the Scriptures teach that he will reward genuine faithfulness. He will be prepared to say to his righteous disciple, "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many

things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."[23] There will be measures of reward, according to faithfulness and diligence.

2. *Place.*

Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you."[24] Heaven is a place where all the redeemed are to have perfect fellowship with the Triune God, the holy angels, and each other. In some passages it is described as a country;[25] in others as a city;[26] and in yet others it is pictured as a home.[27] But the characteristic word is Kingdom. The Kingdom of Heaven is both a place and a state—a realm in which God reigns supremely as King, and a state in which his subjects serve him in glad submission.

3. *Heaven is everlasting.*

There will be no more separation. We shall live in his presence throughout an unending eternity. We shall grow in his likeness and in his service. He will be our God and we shall be his people forevermore.

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[23]Matt. 25: 21. See also Luke 19: 12-27.
[24]John 14: 2.
[25]Hebrews 11: 14-16.
[26]Hebrews 11: 10, 16; Rev. 21.
[27]John 14: 2, 3.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND EXAMINATION WITH SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS

CHAPTER I—SOURCE AND AUTHORITY

Questions

1. What is conversion? Define Christian experience.
2. State three advantages of using Christian experience in the study of our doctrines.
3. Name the three factors that make the Bible a trustworthy source of Christian doctrine.
4. What is revelation, and how was it affected by sin?
5. What is meant by the progressive element in biblical revelation?
6. What is meant by the inspiration of the Scriptures?
7. What is meant by illumination in the use of the Scriptures?
8. What are some evidences that support the claim that the Bible is the inspired Word of God?
9. In what sense is Christian experience a source of our doctrines?
10. What are the marks of the authority of the Bible?
11. What is meant by the sufficiency of the Bible?
12. What is meant by the element of certainty in the Bible?

Thought Question—What were the influences that brought about your conversion, and what effect did your conversion experience produce upon your life?

Outline

I. Method of Christian experience.
   Story of conversion experience.
   1. Christian experience defined.
   2. Advantage of the method of Christian experience.
      (1) Saves us from formalism.
      (2) Sets forth a sound principle of interpretation.
      (3) Serves as a medium of certifying our beliefs.

II. Source of our doctrines.
  1. The Bible.
    (1) Three factors that make the Bible a trustworthy source of Christian doctrine.
      (a) Revelation.
        Effect of sin on revelation.
        Progressive element in biblical revelation.
      (b) Inspiration—divine guidance in writing the record of the revelation.
      (c) Illumination—divine guidance in study.
    (2) Three lines of evidence that support the claim that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.
      (a) Its unity.
      (b) Its preservation through the centuries.
      (c) Its influence upon man.
  2. Christian experience.

III. Authority in the Christian religion—the Bible.
  1. Its sufficiency.
  2. Its certainty.

CHAPTER II—GOD

Questions

1. Does the Bible seek to prove the existence of God, or does it assume his existence?
2. How may a philosopher prove the existence of God?
3. What are the three essential attributes of God?
4. What is meant by saying that God is spirit?
5. Show how the fact that God is spirit implies his omnipresence and eternity.
6. What are the four aspects of God's nature that are involved in the conception of God as power?
7. What is meant by saying that God is a personal being?
8. What are the character attributes of God?
9. What is meant by saying that God is love?
10. What is meant by the righteousness of God?
11. What is meant by saying that God is truth?
12. What is the holiness of God?

13. What is dualism, polytheism, pantheism?
14. Define monotheism and give three lines of evidence to support it.
15. What is meant by the doctrine of the Trinity?

Thought Question—What is your conception of God? Try to think it through so that you may be able to tell others what God means to you.

Outline

Introductory—The idea of God a formative principle in religion.

I. Existence of God.
   1. Assumed in the Bible.
   2. Philosophical proofs, or proofs from inference.
      (1) From the effect to the cause—cosmological proof.
      (2) From the design to the designer—teleological proof.
      (3) From the nature of man to an infinite creator and ruler—anthropological proof.
      (4) From man's intuitive idea of God to a God to correspond to that idea—ontological proof.
      (5) From man's innate recognition of right to the infinite standard of right—moral proof.
   3. Christian experience.
      (1) Accepts all proofs from philosophy.
      (2) But offers a vital and certain knowledge through personal relation with God.

II. The Essence of God.
   1. God is spirit.
      (1) Omnipresent—independent of space.
      (2) Eternal—independent of time.
   2. God is power.
      (1) Infinite—unlimited power.
      (2) Creator—inexhaustible power.
      (3) Sovereign—absolute power.
      (4) Providence of God—sustaining and controlling power.
   3. God is a person.
      (1) Self-conscious.
      (2) Self-determining.

III. The Character of God.
  1. God is love.
    (1) Definition.
    (2) The broad and the deep reach of God's love.
  2. God is righteous.
  3. God is truth.
    (1) Definition.
    (2) The standard.
  4. God is holy.

IV. The Unity and Trinity of God.
  1. God is one.
    (1) Contrary views.
      (a) Dualism.
      (b) Polytheism.
      (c) Pantheism.
    (2) Christian view—monotheism—three lines of evidence to support this view.
      (a) Evidence in nature.
      (b) Evidence in the Bible.
      (c) Evidence in Christian experience.
  2. God is triune.
    (1) One in essence, three in persons.
    (2) Doctrine of the Trinity should be taken on the basis of faith, rather than intellectual explanation.

CHAPTER III—MAN AND SIN

Questions

1. What do we know about the origin of man? Give answers from philosophy, science, the Bible, and Christian experience.
2. What are the chief aspects of man's spiritual nature?
3. Why do we believe in the immortality of man?
4. What do science and philosophy have to say about the immortality of man?
5. What was the state of man before the fall? What two facts enabled man to have perfect fellowship with God before the fall?

6. What is meant by racial depravity in sin?
7. In what sense is sin hereditary?
8. What is guilt?
9. What is meant by penalty of sin? What is the chief penalty of sin?
10. What is the nature of sin?

Thought Question—Why must there be a penalty for sin?

Outline

I. Man.
  1. Origin.
    (1) Answer of philosophy.
    (2) Answer of science.
    (3) Answer of the Bible.
    (4) Answer of Christian experience.
  2. Nature.
    (1) Physical being.
    (2) Spiritual being.
      (a) Intellectual.
      (b) Emotional.
      (c) Volitional.
      (d) Moral.
  3. Immortality.
    (1) Evidence from science.
    (2) Evidence from philosophy.
    (3) Evidence from the Scriptures.
      (a) In Old Testament—positive, but not developed.
      (b) In New Testament—based upon the resurrection of Christ.

II. Sin.
  1. Fall of man.
  2. Sin and the race.
    (1) Sin produces racial depravity.
    (2) Sin is hereditary.
    (3) Consequences of sin:
      (a) Guilt.
      (b) Penalty.
  3. Nature of sin.
    (1) Act of rebellion.

(2) State of uncleanness.
(3) Attitude of unbelief.

CHAPTER IV—CHRIST THE MEDIATOR

Questions

1. What two requirements did Jesus have to meet in order to be the mediator between God and man?
2. Why do we believe that Christ pre-existed as the Son of God?
3. What are the four proofs of his deity that Jesus set forth in the fifth chapter of John?
4. Give some instances in which others claimed deity for Christ.
5. Why was it necessary for Christ to become man?
6. Why was it necessary for Christ to become an Israelite?
7. In what sense did Jesus live a perfect life?
8. What was the twofold need that Jesus met in his death?
9. What is meant by saying that Christ's death was substitutionary and vicarious?
10. Was the resurrection of Christ spiritual or physical? (What is your reason for so believing?)
11. Give five proofs of the resurrection of Jesus.
12. In what way is Christ carrying on his mediating work now?

Thought Question—What is your conception of the meaning of the death of Christ?

Outline

Introduction.

1. God was not content to leave man in his sin.
2. Man was not content to remain in sin.
3. A plan of salvation was needed. Christ is qualified to be the mediator.

I. Son of God.

1. Eternal—Christ pre-existed as Son of God.
   (1) Jesus claimed it.
   (2) John claimed it for him in the Prologue of his Gospel.
   (3) New Testament claims that Christ was active in the creation of the world.
2. Incarnate Son of God.
   Matthew and Luke give the account of the virgin birth.

John and Paul imply it.

3. Jesus claimed deity.
   (1) John 3: 16.
   (2) Luke 5: 18-26.
   (3) In the fifth chapter of John Jesus sets forth four proofs of his deity.
   (4) Matt. 26: 63, 64.
4. Others claimed it for him.
   (1) The whole New Testament is witness.
   (2) Peter asserted it (Matt. 16: 16; 2 Peter 1: 1).
   (3) Thomas: "My Lord and my God."
   (4) John (John 20: 31).
   (5) Paul asserted it (Col. 2: 9; Titus 2: 13).
5. Christian experience affirms his deity.

II. Son of Man.

The only way God could enter saving relations with man.

1. Identified with the race.
   (1) Came into the world as a body.
   (2) Grew normally.
   (3) Suffered.
2. An Israelite.
   (1) To fulfil prophecy and the promise of God.
   (2) To break national prejudice and offer salvation to the world.

III. Saviour.

1. One person. Human in nature. Divine in nature. But one person.
2. Perfect life.
   (1) Sinlessness.
   (2) Perfect obedience,
      (a) To moral law—Mosaic law.
      (b) To God in law of filial devotion.
      (c) To law of sin and death.
3. Death—met a twofold need.
   (1) On man's side—to break the power of sin and death.
      (a) Substitutional atonement.

a. Fulfilment of Old Testament teaching concerning the atonement.
b. Taught in New Testament. Jesus taught it. Paul taught it.

(b) Vicarious atonement.

(2) On God's side—to provide a medium through which his grace might be given to man.

4. The resurrection of Christ—sealed with divine power his saving work in his life and death.
   (1) Nature of his resurrection—was it spiritual or physical?
      (a) Spiritual in that people experienced his presence.
      (b) Physical in that he ate, walked and talked with his disciples.
   (2) Proof of his resurrection.
      (a) Empty tomb.
      (b) Many saw him.
      (c) Early disciples preached his resurrection wherever they went.
      (d) Whole New Testament is proof.
      (e) Christian experience testifies to a living Christ.
5. Present mediator, high priest.
   Christ intercedes now for believers at the right hand of God.

CHAPTER V—THE HOLY SPIRIT

Questions

1. Should we refer to the Holy Spirit as "it" or as "he"? Why?
2. Should we be concerned to have more of the Spirit, or to let him have more of us?
3. In what way does the Bible present the Holy Spirit as a person?
4. What are the three phases of the work of the Spirit in revelation?
5. What are the three phases of the work of the Spirit with the unregenerate?
6. In what way does the Spirit work with the regenerate?

7. What is the difference in the consciousness of sin in the unsaved and the saved?
8. What does the Holy Spirit teach the Christian?
9. How may we cultivate the fellowship of the Spirit?
10. What is the greatest work that the Spirit can accomplish through the Christian?

Thought Question—How may I give the Holy Spirit a greater place in my life?

Outline

Introduction.

The Holy Spirit came to carry forward the work that Jesus began.

I. The Personality of the Holy Spirit.

1. Presented in the Bible as a person.
   (1) He knows, has mind.
   (2) He loves, has emotions.
   (3) He exercises will.
2. Our experience with him proves that he is a person.

II. The Deity of the Holy Spirit.

This fact is more neglected than questioned.

1. Spoken of in the Bible as God.
2. His work with us in Christian experience is that of God.

III. The Work of the Holy Spirit.

1. In Revelation.
   (1) The gift of revelation—through the prophets, in Jesus, and through the disciples.
   (2) Recording the revelation—inspiration.
   (3) Interpreting the revelation—illumination.
2. With the unregenerate.
   (1) Witnesses to Christ.
   (2) Witnesses to the sinfulness of the lost—leads the unregenerate to see his sinful nature.
   (3) Makes the saving work of Christ effective.
3. With the regenerate.
   (1) Quickens our consciousness of sin.
   (2) Gives us strength to overcome sin.

(3) Teaches us concerning
(a) Christ.
(b) Prayer.
(c) The will of God in Christian service.

Conclusion

1. The Christian should cultivate the fellowship of the Spirit, even as we cultivate human friendship.
2. This we may do by Bible study, prayer and meditation.
3. The Spirit achieves his greatest work in us when through us he can lead others to a saving knowledge of Christ.

CHAPTER VI—REPENTANCE AND FAITH

Questions

1. Give a brief definition of repentance.
2. In what sense is repentance a change of mind?
3. What is the difference between mere regret and true repentance?
4. What is the acid test of repentance?
5. How often should a person repent?
6. What are the three elements involved in faith?
7. What is the relation of faith to salvation?
8. What is the relation of faith to works in salvation?
9. To whom should confession of repentance be made? Why?
10. To whom should confession of faith be made? Why?

Thought Question—Why is faith the condition of salvation?

Outline

I. Repentance.

Five facts to be emphasized.

1. A change of mind regarding sin.
   (1) Recognize the nature of sin and that we are sinners.
   (2) Should see sin in the light of our relation to God.
   (3) Should see sin from God's viewpoint.
2. It is sorrow for sin.
   (1) Must be godly sorrow.
   (2) Difference between mere regret and godly sorrow.
3. It is turning away from sin.

4. It is followed by peace and joy.
5. It is the permanent attitude of the Christian.

II. Faith.

1. What is faith? Three statements: it is
   (1) Knowledge (of Christ the Saviour).
   (2) Belief (that Christ is able to save).
   (3) Trust (in Christ to save).
2. Relation to salvation.
   (1) Condition on which we are saved.
   (2) No conflict with works. Faith produces works.

III. Confession.

1. The inevitable consequence of repentance and faith.
2. Confession of repentance.
   (1) To God (where the sin is against God).
   (2) To man (where the sin is against man).
3. Confession of faith.
   (1) To God directly.
   (2) Before the church publicly.

CHAPTER VII—FORGIVENESS, JUSTIFICATION, AND ADOPTION

Questions

1. What do we mean by God's forgiveness of our sins?
2. What is the significance of the death of Christ in the doctrine of forgiveness?
3. What is included in the confession through which we appropriate forgiveness?
4. What is justification?
5. What is the twofold significance that the death of Christ has for our justification?
6. Why is justification by faith and not by works?
7. What are the two facts that prevent us from thinking of justification as simply a legal transaction?
8. What is the relation of justification to forgiveness and regeneration?
9. What two aspects of God's character are shown in justification and adoption?

10. In what sense are all men the sons of God, and in what sense are only the saved the sons of God?

Thought Question—Why is it that justification and adoption occur only once in Christian experience while forgiveness must be experienced many times over?

Outline

I. Forgiveness.
  1. Meaning.
    (1) Two words used in the Greek New Testament.
      (a) One means "to send away."
      (b) The other means "to show one's self gracious."
    (2) Reference in the first word, which is the more common, is to individual sins. The reference in the second is to the sinner in the light of his individual sins.
    (3) The meaning of sin has much to do with the meaning of forgiveness.
  2. Grounded in the death of Christ.
    (1) The death of Christ revealed God's infinite love in forgiving man.
    (2) It revealed God's power as greater than the power of sin.
  3. Realized through confession.
    This must include repentance, faith, forgiveness of others, and prayer to God for forgiveness.
  4. Human forgiveness.
    (1) Same meaning holds here.
    (2) Condition that prepares us to receive God's forgiveness.

II. Justification.
  1. Definition.
  2. Grounded in the death of Christ.
    (1) His death is a propitiation for our sin.
    (2) His death preserves the justice of God in justifying sinners.
  3. Conditioned by faith and repentance.

4. Justification is vital rather than legal. Two facts make it so:
   (1) It is accomplished through the death of Christ.
   (2) Faith is the condition.
5. Relation of justification to forgiveness and regeneration.
   (1) Justification has reference to guilt while forgiveness has reference to sins.
   (2) In justification God gives the sinner a new standing with him, in regeneration God gives the sinner a new disposition of life. They go together in Christian experience.

III. Adoption.

1. Definition.
   (1) Related to regeneration.
   (2) Means more than is put in the ordinary use of the word. There is a vital connection.
   (3) In justification God is the judge dealing with the transgressor, in adoption he is the Father dealing with the son.
2. The Fatherhood of God and the sonship of man.
   (1) God is Father of all men in that he is the Creator of all men. He is the Father of Christians in a more particular sense.
   (3) By creation all men are potential sons of God, but only Christians are actually sons of God.
3. The consciousness of sonship is the climax of man's side of saving experience.

CHAPTER VIII—REGENERATION AND SANCTIFICATION

Questions

1. What is regeneration?
2. Why do we say that the Holy Spirit must be the agent in regeneration?
3. What means does he use in regenerating men?
4. How may we know that we are saved?
5. What is the original meaning of the word "sanctify"?

6. Why must regeneration come before sanctification?
7. What is the act involved in sanctification?
8. What is the attitude involved in sanctification?
9. What is the relation involved in sanctification?
10. Who is the agent and what is the medium of sanctification?

Thought Question—Why is the doctrine of sanctification so important?

Outline

I. Regeneration.
   1. Definition. It is
      (1) Not the creation of a new constitution in us.
      (2) The creation of a new disposition.
      (3) An act of God, rather than an achievement of man.
      (4) The ingrafting of a new life.
   2. Agent, the Holy Spirit.
   3. The means used, the gospel of Christ.
   4. Assurance of regeneration. We may know by
      (1) The Scriptures.
      (2) Experience.
      (3) The fruits of the life.

II. Sanctification.
   1. Definition.
   (1) Meaning of the word.
   (2) An act of complete consecration.
      (3) An attitude of life.
      (4) A relation to God—God's ownership and possession of the Christian.
   2. The agent in sanctification—the Holy Spirit.
   3. The medium of sanctification—the Word of God.

CHAPTER IX—THE CHURCH AND THE ORDINANCES

Questions

1. What is the literal meaning of the word "ecclesia," or church?
2. What are the two uses of the word with reference to the church of Christ in the New Testament?
3. Give a definition of the church.
4. What is the twofold prerequisite condition to membership in the church?

5. What is the purpose of the church?
6. What is meant by saying that the church is autonomous and democratic?
7. What officers should the church have?
8. Why do we speak of baptism and the Lord's Supper as ordinances rather than as sacraments?
9. What is the form and the meaning of baptism, and why is every believer under obligation to be baptized?
10. What is the meaning of the Lord's Supper and why is every baptized believer under obligation to observe it?

Thought Question—What place should the church hold in Christian experience?

Outline

I. The Church.
   1. Definition.
      (1) A body of baptized believers.
      (2) Founded by Christ.
      (3) Purpose.
   2. Authority.
      (1) Within the local body—autonomous and democratic.
      (2) In relations with other churches—co-operation.
      (3) In relation with civil governments—separation.
   3. Officers.
      (1) Bishops, elders, or pastors.
      (2) Deacons.

II. The Ordinances.
   1. Baptism.
      (1) Form—immersion.
      (2) Meaning.
      (3) Obligation to be baptized, because
         (a) Christ instituted it and commanded it.
         (b) Of the meaning that it symbolizes.
   2. The Lord's Supper.
      (1) Meaning.
         (a) Erroneous view—that it is a sacrament.
         (b) True view—that it is a memorial.
      (2) Obligation to observe it.

CHAPTER X—DEATH AND THE LIFE BEYOND

Questions

1. What is physical death? What is spiritual death? What does physical death mean to the Christian?
2. What is the state of the soul between death and the resurrection?
3. What is to be the manner of the return of Christ?
4. What should be the Christian's attitude toward Christ's return?
5. Why do we believe that there is to be a bodily resurrection of the dead? By what power is it to be accomplished?
6. Who is to be the judge in the last judgment day? Who will be judged?
7. On what basis will judgment be rendered? What is the purpose of the judgment?
8. What will be the state of the wicked in hell?
9. Why must there be such a place as hell?
10. What is to be the state of the righteous in heaven? What are some of the words used to describe heaven as a place?

Thought Question—What is the importance of the doctrines concerning death and the life beyond?

Outline

I. Death.
   1. Physical—separation of the spirit from the body.
   2. Spiritual—separation of the soul from God. Eternal death.
   3. Physical death for the Christian.
      Transformed into triumph.

II. The Intermediate state.
   1. Disembodied but conscious existence.
   2. Twofold state—division between the redeemed and lost.

III. The Second Coming of Christ.
   1. Emphasized in the New Testament.
   2. Time unrevealed.
   3. Outward and visible.
   4. The Christian's attitude toward Christ's return.

IV. The Resurrection.
   1. Based on the resurrection of Christ.
   2. To be accomplished through the presence and power of Christ.
   3. A resurrection of the body.

V. The Judgment.
   1. The fact.
   2. The Judge.
   3. The subjects.
   4. The basis.
   5. The purpose.

VI. Hell.
   1. State.
   2. Place.
   3. Everlasting punishment.

VII. Heaven.
   1. State.
   2. Place.
   3. Everlasting.

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